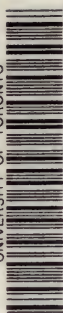


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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THE
CONNECTION

BETWEEN THE

SACRED WRITINGS AND THE LITERATURE

OF

Jewish and Heathen Authors,

PARTICULARLY THAT OF THE

CLASSICAL AGES,

ILLUSTRATED,

PRINCIPALLY WITH A VIEW TO EVIDENCE IN CONFIRMATION

OF THE TRUTH OF

REVEALED RELIGION.

~~~~~  
**BY ROBERT GRAY, D. D.**

PEEBENDARY OF DURHAM AND OF CHICHESTER, AND  
RECTOR OF BISHOP WEARMOUTH.

~~~~~  
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

=====

SECOND EDITION.

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London :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

AND SOLD BY F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.

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1819.



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TO THE
HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND
THE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

MY LORD,

SINCE I had the honour of inscribing the first Edition of this Work to your Lordship, it has experienced that countenance from the public, which encourages me again to bring it forward in, I trust, an improved form.

I am led to indulge the hope, that in directing attention to those testimonies to the truth and divine authority of the Scriptures which are casually scattered through the profane writings of antiquity, and

which are here collected under one general point of view, I may contribute to impress upon the mind of the classical student a permanent reverence for that Religion, which alone has diffused any sure and steady light during the many ages that have passed away, and which alone can impart any unerring direction, or adequate support amidst the temptations and vicissitudes of life.

I do not regret the time which I have devoted to the work amidst many avocations, since the principles which I have attempted to lay down, have been judged by men eminent for their literary character and their station, useful to direct the student in the examination of the Greek and Latin writers, with a view to those objects of religious importance, which they were perhaps principally designed to fulfil ; and therefore so far calculated to concur in promoting that efficacious system of instruction in the history and doctrines of revelation, which are justly considered as chief

objects of attention in our Universities. The evidence of Revelation which begins with the origin of the world, and spreads in the majestic scheme of Providence, through every generation, is so implicated with the history and literature of antiquity, that the more extensive and accurate our researches are, the more they tend to confirm our respect for the authority and importance of its communications. Hence it is, that so many proofs of the influence of an enlightened faith are to be found in our seats of learning, leading men of distinguished talents and eminent acquirements to useful and unostentatious exertions, to a dignified independence of character, and, as might be exemplified in signal instances, to a voluntary retreat from stations of influence and of power when within the scope of their attainment, and even when proffered to their claims.

It is impossible to have lived among such men, or to have traced in your Lordship's diocese the effects which have resulted

to society from the exertions of the many eminent persons whom you have selected as the objects of your patronage, and not to feel the most lively conviction of their worth. It is impossible not to be convinced, that we must look to those who early imbibe sound knowledge under institutions, in which a due regard is paid to religious instruction, for that firm and cordial defence of our Constitution both in Church and State, which is necessary, when there is often so much cause to lament a vague latitude of opinion, as to doctrines essential to the preservation of truth; and a coldness with respect to institutions sanctioned by the example of the purest ages, compacted with the frame of our Constitution and Laws, and indispensable to the maintenance of our civil and religious interests.

Permit me, upon this occasion, again to express the deep sense of the important obligations and gratifying marks of kindness which for many years I have experienced from your Lordship; and to renew

my earnest hope, that you may still long continue, amidst the many distinctions of a life happily protracted in the enjoyment of eminent blessings, to promote the benefit of society, by a generous encouragement of every object connected with the interests of Religion and Literature ; and to receive, in the just acknowledgment of your claims, every testimony of public respect, and every tribute of private gratitude.

I remain,

MY LORD,

With sincere attachment and respect,

Your Lordship's greatly obliged,
and faithful Servant,

ROBERT GRAY.

*Rectory, Bishop Wearmouth,
May 15, 1819.*

ERRATA TO VOL. I.

- Page 12, line 2 from bottom, *after as, read as well as*
28, line 17, note ‡, *instead of lib. viii. c. 1—7, read Euseb. Præp.*
Evang. lib. viii. c. 1—5; lib. ix. c. 6; lib. xiii. c. 12.
30, *for Scripture, read Scriptures*
160, line 15, *after only, add the admission of*
198, note *, last line, *for diligenza, read diligenza*
219, line 12, *for inspire, read inspires*
241, last line, *instead of ecords, read records*
290, line 13, *for Emperors, read Emperor*
297, line 9, *for easy, read early; and line 12, delete early*
300, line 14, *for Plato, read Philo*
342, line 19, *for double, read durable*
368, note ‡, *instead of Raphael in Philet. 4022, read Raphael on*
Philip. iv. 22.

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INTRODUCTION.

FROM a superficial view of that system of education which is generally established in this country, an opinion has been sometimes entertained, that heathen literature occupies too large a portion of time. This opinion seems to have originated in an erroneous persuasion, that the attention of the classical student is directed to the works of Pagan antiquity, solely, with a view to the acquisition of languages, or to the attainment of that knowledge which is calculated merely to improve the taste, and to furnish amusement for the leisure hours of life.

It is obvious, indeed, that these are among the advantages which result from a study of the heathen writings, and undoubtedly not the least of them, is an accurate and critical knowledge of the languages into which the Scriptures of the Old Testament were translated, nearly three centuries before the birth of Christ, and in which the writings of the

New Testament, with a single exception, were originally composed. A little reflection, however, will suggest advantages of no inconsiderable importance, which may be drawn from a full and systematic examination of the remains of heathen antiquity, in philosophy, in history, and in poetry; and at the same time will convince us, that the objections which have been brought against such attention to classical studies, and the presumption that those studies lead to little information of a solid nature, argue a defective apprehension of the principal objects which should be in the contemplation of every well concerted plan of classical instruction, and which such a plan usually promotes.

It should be observed, that in many departments of the liberal arts, besides those of philology and criticism, already alluded to, and even in some of the departments of science, a basis is laid on classical ground.

The most striking illustration, however, of the importance of heathen literature, arises from its connection with that of the sacred writings, from the evidence which it affords in confirmation of the doctrines, institutions and facts upon which Christianity is founded, or to which its records indirectly relate. In-

deed, it may not unreasonably be presumed, that the writings of Pagan antiquity have been providentially preserved with peculiar regard to this great object, since, notwithstanding numerous productions of past ages have perished, sufficient remains are still possessed, to unite the cause of heathen literature with that of religion, and to render the one, subservient to the interests of the other.

Accordingly, the heathen writings substantiate, by an independent and collateral report, the occurrence of many of the events, and the accomplishment of many of the prophecies recorded by the inspired writers; they establish the accuracy of many incidental circumstances, which are interspersed throughout the Scriptures, and above all, by the gradually perverted representations which they give of revealed doctrines and institutions, they attest the actual communication of such truths from time to time, and pay the tribute of experience to the wisdom and necessity of a written revelation.

On the other hand it must be admitted, that in proportion as the heathen writings are found to communicate these testimonies to the cause of religion, they receive an increased value, since whatever lustre they throw upon

it, is reflected back upon them, and tends to raise them in our esteem.

But if the literature of the heathens presents much which strengthens the evidence of revealed religion, that of the Jews affords still more abundant confirmation of the authority of its institutions, and of the fidelity of its records. Without entering into the wide field of Rabbinical learning, (of which the earlier productions, amidst many vain traditions, authenticate and illustrate the fundamental doctrines of Scripture), and confining ourselves to the works of Philo and Josephus, we find that these eminent men every where appeal to the Scriptures, as to the oracles of God; deriving all their religious and moral convictions from them, stating events in the same manner, and nearly in the same words, which the sacred historians employ, and describing the accomplishment of prophecies delivered in the books of the Old and New Testament.

It need scarcely be mentioned, that the main proofs in favour of the authority and importance of the sacred writings, are to be drawn from the internal evidence of inspiration which they contain, and from the wonderful connection and harmony of a scheme,

carried on with uniform design, and attested by men miraculously supported through successive ages ; but the subsidiary proofs which are to be deduced from the documents of human learning, however inferior they may be, are still valuable, and the more so, because they are to be found casually scattered without connection or design, in various works, produced by writers who lived in periods remote, and in countries distant from each other, who were not engaged in any common views, and who had no interest to confirm the sacred accounts.

In order to prove, to what great extent the Jewish and heathen literature is capable of affording such tribute to religion, and consequently of illustrating the wisdom and government of Providence, the author will endeavour to sketch out, in the ensuing pages, an abstract of some of the particulars, which throw a light on the history, the prophecies, the doctrines, and the institutions of religion, following where it may be, the order of time in the production of the extracts. He trusts that he shall be able to shew, that the whole range of ancient learning presents a wide scope for such important disquisitions, though it is his intention to take rather a popular view,

than any elaborate survey of the subject. He is desirous—not to investigate every circumstance which bears a resemblance to objects described in Scripture, or to examine all the channels of intelligence which the heathens possessed, but only to give a general relief to particulars which exemplify the connection between the sacred and profane writings; and by interesting the attention of the classical student, to lead him to prosecute enquiries, which may be carried with advantage far beyond the limits of the present work.

It is to be observed, generally, with respect to many of the circumstances which will be adduced, that where a correspondence is discoverable between the ordinances of divine, and those of apparently human institution, the latter might have been adopted, from their intrinsic utility, and under the influence of that propensity to imitation, which has at all times, generally and strongly prevailed.

The resemblance which existed between many of the accounts recorded in sacred writ and those of profane history, was so strong, that it did not escape the observation of the heathens to whom the Scriptures were made

known. From that predilection of vanity, however, with which all nations have flattered themselves in the notion of high antiquity, and from the influence of that error by which men are naturally led to conceive those reports to be authentic and original, which they have first heard or read, the heathens considered their own fables as the sources from which the sacred writers had borrowed.

This correspondence between many sacred and profane accounts, led Celsus and other adversaries of Christianity, to allege, without reflecting on the acknowledged antiquity of Moses, that he had depraved the heathen reports, particularly in his relations with respect to the tower of Babel, and the confusion of tongues: nor have there been wanting writers in modern times, who, violating all probability and historical truth, have endeavoured to confirm such misrepresentations. We, however, to borrow the remark of Stillingfleet, cannot do better than imitate Thales, who took the height of the pyramids by measuring the length of the shadows, and thus estimate the antiquity of truth by the extent of the fabulous productions.

Enquiries upon this subject, as the same writer has observed, are attended with so

much the greater difficulty, as the truth we pursue, often takes covert under great antiquity, and we are forced to follow its flying steps through the dark and shady regions of ancient history.

A general presumption may be formed in favour of the superior antiquity, and original claims of sacred history, from a consideration of the remarkable reverence which the Jews have ever manifested, both for the books which they believe to be of divine authority, and for the institutions of which those books describe the establishment. It is not probable that, with such sentiments, they should have been disposed to borrow from foreign sources of information: and this conclusion is confirmed by the tenacious adherence which they have always shewn to their own laws and customs, as well as by their rooted aversion to admit any new rites of religion. In this view of the subject, there can be little doubt, that where any resemblance exists between the sacred writings and the heathen accounts, the former should be considered as the primary and original documents.

It is to be remarked, likewise, that the rise and progress of society, and the derivation and succession of nations in the order of time,

should be attended to, in the examination of all claims to priority, though, in many dissertations upon this subject, a great ignorance, or disregard, of such considerations is too often to be observed.

The Grecian and Roman states, from the writers of which we draw our chief knowledge of the history of heathen nations, and our information with respect to their mythology, opinions and laws, were so much more recent as to all points of competition, that there can be little difficulty in ascertaining where a precedency should be allowed, and imitation or corruption of accounts be imputed, whenever discussions arise as to the origin and fidelity of the relation and circumstances which are described under different, though similar, representations.

The Assyrians and Egyptians may be allowed to stand upon an equal basis of antiquity with the immediate descendants of Abraham, or even upon a higher foundation as flourishing nations; but considering that men dispersed from the east, and that colonies emigrated from Asia to Europe, we must be led to trace the descent of different people in the line of regular procession, and to place the pretensions of the Grecians below any

ground of contest for equality in point of antiquity, with the Hebrews; while indeed there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate the derivation of much of the knowledge of Greece from Egypt and the East.

That the peculiar economy of the Hebrew dispensation, and the miraculous circumstances by which it was introduced and maintained, were calculated to excite considerable attention among other nations, and that great facilities were opened to other people for such intercourse and communication as might enable them to borrow information from the Jews and their writings, will appear from the slightest retrospect.

It was impossible that the rise and progress of the Hebrew nation should not have engaged the notice of all, who were within reach of the rumour of the chosen people, or who saw that “the Lord had done great things for them,” and many of the neighbouring kingdoms indeed felt “the terrors of the Lord fallen upon themselves.” Some writers suppose Job to allude to the Israelites in the twelfth chapter and twenty-fourth verse of his book, describing them as “the chief people of the earth,” with reference possibly to the Divine favour which they experienced.

The vicissitudes and revolutions also, to which this people, even from the beginning, were exposed, were calculated to make them and their religion known. They were carried, or spread, into different countries at periods when the several nations, among whom they were placed, had attained great eminence by their advancement in civilization and science, as into Egypt, Assyria, Greece, and Italy, so that they must have attracted notice at the very time at which it was most important that they should be observed. The intercourse with other parts of the world which resulted from the fame and the commercial enterprizes of David and Solomon, and the facilities of communication with the Jews, afforded in later times by their dispersion and continued abode in Assyria, Egypt, and other countries, to which there was a great resort, were very extensive*.

The greater part of the ten tribes remained after the captivity, in Assyria, declining to return with those, who went back under the conduct of Ezra and Nehemiah†. Notwithstanding indeed the decree of Cyrus was

* Euseb. præp. Evang. 1 Chron. xiv. 2 Chron. ix. 12—14.

† Talmud Babylon in Kiddush, and Calmet Com. vol. vi.

addressed to all the people of Israel*, only four of the twenty-four courses of the sons of Aaron were re-established, though in order to keep up the number, each of the four courses subdivided itself into six. Josephus states that but two tribes were subject to the Romans in Asia and Europe, and that the rest remained in unnumbered multitudes beyond the Euphrates. Schools were established at Babylon and other places, and, according to the account of this historian, many of the Jews were to be found in Babylon in his time †. They were to be found also at Seleucia and at Susa.

It appears from a letter of Eleazar to Ptolemy, preserved by Josephus, that the distinct character of the tribes was long after maintained: since he professes to have sent six elders from each tribe to assist in the Septuagint version ‡.

Different writers represent colonies of Jews to have spread through almost all countries, as Syria, lower Asia, and Greece, so that it was difficult to find a place in the habitable

* Ezra i. 3.; vii. 13.

† Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. 5. p. 482. Edit. Hudson. Prideaux's Connect. Part I. Book i. Acts ii. 9.

‡ Antiq. lib. xii. c. 2. Acts xxvi. 7.

world which had not admitted them. They state, that the Egyptians, Cyrenæans, and other people, imitated their way of living, and maintained great bodies of them, growing up to greater prosperity with them, and sometimes making use of their laws; and that the Jews had places assigned to them in Egypt, which they inhabited, beside what was particularly allotted to their nation at Alexandria, where they had a large part of the city*.

The ten tribes had been carried principally into Media and Persia†. Descendants of these, and probably of the other two tribes, were to be found dispersed through the East‡; who repaired occasionally to Jerusalem§, and were addressed by the apostles when Christianity was introduced||.

Benjamin Tudela, in his Itinerary published towards the close of the 12th century, states, probably with some exaggeration, that there were fifty cities of Jews in the mountainous parts of Media; and it is said that some Jews are still to be found in Tartary, the

* Philo, Legat. ad Caium. Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 7.

† 1 Chron. v. 26. 2 Kings xvii. 6.

‡ Joseph. Antiq. l. xi. c. 5, 6.

§ Acts ii. 5—11.

|| 1 Pet. i. 1. James i. 1.

descendants possibly of those who were transported into the northern countries beyond the Bosphorus, and from whom they derived some Jewish customs; while others of the same race are supposed by Major Rennel to exist among the Afgans*.

There is an account given in the second book of Esdras, which may claim some notice, though the book indeed is not of great authority among those who reject the decisions of the Romish Church. It is there related that “the tribes took this counsel among themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen to go forth into a further country, where never mankind dwelt, that they might there keep their statutes, which they never kept in their own land, and they entered into Euphrates by the narrow passages of the river, for the Most High then shewed signs for them, and held still the flood ’till they were passed over, for through that country there was a great way to go, namely, of a year and a half, and the same region is called Arsareth†.”

Eldad, a Jew of the 13th century, places

* Rennel’s Geograph. Syst. of Herodot. p. 390.

† 2 Esdras xiii. 41—45.

the ten tribes in Ethiopia, others in Assyria, others in Arabia, and some in the East Indies; while some writers have conceived that they have discovered traces of them in Africa *, and even in America †.

Some proofs might perhaps be adduced of revealed knowledge, transmitted to the heathens by oral tradition from the Patriarchs, to whom they were originally committed; or derived from the Jews, by whom they were preserved, or possibly from written memorials, which might have retained an authority after many corruptions had been introduced, among those who mingled idolatry with the service of the true God.

The inspired writers mention books and chronicles distinct from their own sacred records. The effects of this traditional or written information are discernible in the convictions and maxims which the heathens professed, and they are to be perceived also in the prophetic apprehensions of futurity, which they entertained. Such were those general expectations built on the promises with respect to the Messiah and the future

* See Modern Travels.

† Newton on Prophecy, and Basnage's Hist. of Jews, Book vi. 2, 3. Universal History, &c.

renewal of the corrupted nature of man. Other instances might be produced, as that which Lactantius mentions, (though no great importance can be attached to such accounts) respecting Hystaspes, an ancient King of Media, from whom the river Hydaspes took its name, and whom he states to have committed to record a dream under the interpretation of a prophet, which foreshewed that the Roman Empire and name should be taken away from the earth, and that this alleged prophecy was delivered before that nation of Trojan origin was in existence*. Lactantius describes this king as representing “ the pious
 “ and faithful men of latter times separated
 “ from the guilty, and about to extend their
 “ hands with tears and groans to heaven,
 “ and to implore the faith of Jupiter, that
 “ he would have respect to the earth, and
 “ hear the voice of men, and exterminate
 “ the wicked ;” a prayer which might seem modelled upon some work of inspiration†.

Various revolutions of ancient times led occasionally to an intercourse between remote nations and the Israelites; for instance, the

* Lactant. de Vitâ Beata, lib. vii. 15. p. 704. Edit. Lugd. Bat.

† Idem, lib. vii. c. 18.

Scythians from the neighbourhood of the Palus Mæotis, after conquering the Medes under Cyaxares (in their return from an expedition against Egypt, from which they had been diverted by the presents of Psammeticus) invaded Judea, pillaged the temple of Venus, at Ascalon, and established themselves at Bethsené, a city of the tribe of Manasses beyond Jordan, afterwards called Scythopolis.

The Kings of Syria shewed much kindness to the Jews; Seleucus Nicator in particular made them free of the cities which he built in Asia and Lower Syria, and especially of Antioch, the metropolis, and granted other privileges to them. Antiochus the Great also treated them with much regard, and even furnished them with money and provisions for their sacrifices*.

The situation of Judæa was remarkably adapted to the advancement of the great objects, which appear to have been in the contemplation of God, in the selection of that Holy City as the place which should be called “the Throne of the Lord †.” Looking to the progress of nations, and to the rise and

* Antiq. lib. xii. c. 3.

† Jer. iii. 17.

establishment of the governments which prevailed in the earlier ages, it seems to have been most happily placed as it were in the centre of the three great Continents of the Ancient World; and to have been in the direct line of intercourse, between the Assyrians and Egyptians, and a prominent object of attention to the Grecians and Romans. It was a place of great resort, though but little engaged in commerce. Frequent embassies were interchanged between the Jewish government and foreign nations, which rendered the laws and customs of the Jews known; and however the attachment of this people to their religion might be a subject of invidious reflection, it is certain that many distinguished converts were made to its faith. Proselytes indeed are often mentioned; and Tacitus even in later times, speaks of those who were led to condemn their gods, and to abjure their country, and their kindred*.

The writings of the Jews, inasmuch as they contained many things inconsistent with the received opinions of men, and were composed in a language not generally understood, did not always attract the attention which they merited, and some authors, who were

* Tacit. Histor. lib. v. c. 5.

acquainted with them, affected to pass them over in silence.

Josephus speaks of Hieronymus, who, though a governor of Syria, and a contemporary of Hecatæus, never mentioned the Jews in his book concerning the successors of Alexander.

On the other hand, a contrary spirit was sometimes productive of similar effects, and a veneration for the Jewish writings is said to have withholden the heathens from borrowing from them.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, who directed the translation of the Scriptures to be made, is represented to have enquired, when the laws of Moses were read to him, “ whence it happened, that none of the historians or poets had made mention of such an admirable code :” upon which Demetrius answered, “ that no one dared to touch the text* of those laws, because it was divine and venerable, and because some who had before taken them in hand, had been punished by God †.”

The accounts, which seem to have been borrowed from the sacred books by heathen wri-

* Ἀναγχαφῆς.

† Joseph. Antiq. l. xii. c. 2. p. 518. Edit. Hudson. 1720.

ters, were often much changed and perverted in their transmission through channels of popular information. The ancients also were at all times accustomed to throw a veil over subjects of remote antiquity, or of religious character; and how desirous they who borrow, generally are, to conceal the sources, from which they derive their intelligence, is well known.

There are also other considerations which are applicable, in a peculiar manner, to the case in contemplation. The extraordinary circumstances of the Jews, and the unparalleled nature of their dispensation, were productive of effects, which, while they tended to preserve a marked and distinct character in the nation, insensibly generated an unsocial spirit.

The proofs of divine protection which the favoured race had experienced from its first origin, when it was separated as “a nation of priests and an holy nation,” for the reception of revealed instruction, and for the establishment of a policy introduced and supported by miracles, and designed to imprint a distinct character on the people, led them to entertain extravagant and unreasonable notions of a title to God’s exclusive regard.

In the possession of the sacred records, on

the authority of which they could not but rest with implicit confidence, they contemplated with feelings of peculiar complacency and exultation, the indisputable proofs of a government administered under the immediate sovereignty of God, and regulated upon principles, which discouraged an intermixture with the heathens. Hence even in captivity, which was designed “to mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem*,” they maintained a sullen disposition, a fond attachment to their Country, an ardent desire to return to it, and a confident expectation of the future glory of their nation, to be enjoyed under the universal dominion of a sovereign, of the increase of whose government there was to be no end.

The commandments enjoining them to avoid idolatry, and the strong and animated censures pronounced against it, detached the Jews as a nation from all other people, whose different systems of religion were judged compatible with each other. Hence under feelings sometimes carried to excess, they were disposed, even when in the lowest state of depression, to look with sentiments of

* Jerem. xiii. 9. See also Levit. xxvi. 19.

utter hatred and contempt upon their conquerors, to resist with religious fortitude the imperious mandate to worship the images which were set up, to scoff at the rites and ceremonies of superstition which pervaded every scene of public and private life, to imprecate destruction on their adversaries, and to look forward with exultation to “ the day
 “ when the Gentiles should come unto their
 “ God from the ends of the earth, and say,
 “ surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanities, and things wherein there is no profit*.”

Many instances of the operation of this spirit might be produced, not only during the captivity in Assyria, where the Jews resisted all attempts to shake their attachment to their institutions, but in later times ; since it is recorded that when Herod placed a golden eagle on the temple, it excited an insurrection, in which the eagle was thrown down ; and Josephus also relates, that when Pilate introduced some ensigns into Jerusalem, which contained the image of Tiberius, it occasioned a great commotion, and that Pilate was compelled to order them to be carried back to Cæsarea †.

* Jerem. xvi. 19.

† Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 4 ; see also Philo de Legat. ad Caium.

When Caligula also sent Petronius with an army into Syria, with orders to set up the emperor's statues in the temple, to put to death all who should resist, and to enslave the nation; he was informed, that if he would persist in his resolution of erecting the images, he must first sacrifice the whole Jewish nation, and that they were ready to submit themselves, with their wives and children, to the slaughter. Philo relates, that when the tidings reached Jerusalem, the people abandoned their cities and villages, and repaired to Petronius, both men and women, young and old, with violent expressions of grief, to entreat his intercession with the emperor, and avert the threatened calamity*. Circumstances, which demonstrate the strong attachment of the Jews to their own institutions, and the final impression effected by the influence of their laws†.

The character which the Jews displayed when they flourished under the Divine favour, and the virtues which their repentance drew forth in adversity, often excited the respect of

* De Bel. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 10.

† See also Horace, lib. i. sat. 4. l. ult.

other nations, and their religion and laws were regarded with reverence*.

The aversion, however, which they manifested towards other people, their laws, their ceremonies, and games, provoked resentment; and when they degenerated in later times, and, in consequence of their dissensions and misconduct, became subject to foreign dominion, they experienced a diminution of respect.

The rites and ceremonies of their religion, were hastily derided by those who exercised but little enquiry upon the subject: the origin and tendency of these rites were misrepresented, and injurious reports concerning them were received and circulated with eagerness. Hence it was, that when their laws and institutions were respected by the Roman government, their national character and customs were treated with contempt by individuals; and we find in the Heathen writers, not only the exaggeration of the satirist †, and the sarcastic remarks of the orator ‡, but the mis-

* 1 Kings v. and x. Deut. iv. 6.; xxviii. 1, 10, 13. See books of Esther and Daniel.

† Juv. Sat. 14. l. 103, 104. Horat. and comp. with Joseph cont. Apion l. 2. § 29.

‡ Cicer. Orat. Pro, Flacco. Philo says, *πρᾶγμα γελῶμενον*
παρὰ πολλοίς.

statement of the historian, however philosophical and correct in his general representation *.

The influence of the mutual repugnance, which subsisted between the Jews and the Romans, occasioned many serious inconveniences. Josephus, who witnessed its effects, seems to have exerted himself to soften the Jewish feelings with respect to the Heathens, and to conciliate the good-will of the Romans towards his countrymen †.

Allowing for the operation of an hostile spirit, not easily to be subdued, we are not surprized to find that the Sacred Writings of the Jews excited less reverence among the Greeks and Romans, particularly in later periods, than among people of higher antiquity, and that they were placed by them nearly on the same ground with the records of the Pagan nations ; most of which nations, indeed, professed to have received revelations, and to have been favoured with intercourse with the gods.

When, therefore, we meet with particulars which substantiate the relations of Scripture, we shall in general be disposed to think, that they were derived from tradition, which

* Tacitus, Hist. lib. v. and vi.

† Antiq. lib. xvi. cap. 10.

was transmitted with more correctness in the earlier ages of the world than at present, since the longevity of man was then favourable to fidelity of report ; and the manners of the eastern people, who delighted with peculiar pleasure in relations accurately and circumstantially recited, disposed them to repeat their daily tale with unwearied renewal of the subject as regularly as the evening closed.

The memory of the most remarkable events, spread with the dispersion of mankind, and the accounts of them were handed down in interesting details from father to son, till they became gradually changed and corrupted in the relations of successive generations*.

The various nations which colonized different countries after the confusion of tongues and the dispersion of mankind, carried with them the opinions and customs which then prevailed, retaining at the same time the notions of a common origin and of general events, and a reverence for common progenitors and benefactors. Circumstances, which had happened in the earlier periods of history, were accommodated to subsequent times ; and

* Orig. Gent. Antiq. G. R. Cumberland, published by B. Payne in 1724. Plutarch de Isid. et Osirid. p. 352.

hence the resemblance which is to be found in the superstitions of the different nations of antiquity. The real country, in which the original event occurred, was often forgotten, and became insensibly lost in the variety of statements, while each nation contended for the truth and authority of its own persuasions*.

Notwithstanding, however we may be disposed to attribute much of the correspondence, which exists between sacred and profane accounts, in part to the effect of oral tradition, there are many particulars to be found scattered in the writings of the Heathens, which may lead us to suppose that they had some acquaintance with the sacred books; and it may be useful, therefore, to enquire by what means an approach to the inspired oracles may have been obtained.

It is probable in itself, and there are historical accounts which confirm the belief, that parts of the Sacred Writings, in the original language, were occasionally shewn to the Heathens; as the Prophecies of Isaiah, to Cyrus; and those of Daniel, to Alexander; and, in-

* Shuckford's Sacred and Profane Hist. connect. vol. i. b. v. p. 316, 317. 2d edit.

deed, there can be no reason to doubt that the Jews, who were impressed with a profound reverence for their Scriptures, as written by inspiration, and who seem at all times to have been desirous of making proselytes, did invite attention, where they could, to the invaluable treasures which they possessed. On the other hand, Morinus informs us that the Heathens wished to possess the Scriptures that they might find in them the history of their deities*.

The Septuagint version of the Scriptures, into the Greek language, made at Alexandria in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, about 277 years before Christ, afforded a general access to the sacred oracles†; and there is reason to believe, that the law and the Prophets, if not other parts of the Scripture, were translated into Greek before that period‡.

The Septuagint established so much repu-

* De Linguâ primæva, p. 124. Morinus grounds his assertion on 1st Maccabees, c. iii. v. 4. where the Alexandrian copies read καὶ ἐξεπέτασαν τὸ βιβλίον τῷ νόμῳ περὶ ὧν ἐξηγευνων τὰ ἔθνη τὰ ὁμοιώματα τῶν εἰδώλων αὐτῶν.

† Appendix to the literal Accomplishment of Prophecy, p. 117. 152.

‡ Clemens Alex. Strom. lib. i. c. 22. p. 409. Edit. Potter, lib. viii. c. 1—7.

tation, that it was in general use in the time of our Saviour, and many passages are cited from it by the Evangelical writers.

There can be little doubt that partial translations, at least, of the Scriptures were obtained also, in other languages, before the time of Christ. Such a work, however, as the Septuagint, made under royal patronage, at a period when literature flourished, and when Alexandria was the resort of learned men from all parts, could not but excite considerable attention. The historian would naturally have recourse to a work professing such high antiquity; and the poet would look with eagerness to a production written with such force of description, and animated with such strains of divine eloquence; diversified with beautiful allusions to the works of nature, and inspired with prophetic views of futurity—with visions of ages yet to come.

In proceeding to explore what remains of the structures of ancient times, it is not meant to search for every broken or defaced character, or to consider all the just maxims of Pagan philosophy, as transcribed from entablatures on the Jewish or Christian temples; but only to bring forward a general col-

lection of the proofs, which the Heathen writers afford, of an acquaintance with many of the circumstances described in the Scriptures, and of the extent of information, which they derived from them, and which proofs occasionally are to be discerned, half concealed in mythological and corrupted accounts. The result of such an undertaking cannot but tend to give an interest to the classical works of antiquity, which they could not otherwise possess ; and to draw testimonies to Christianity from monuments, which may seem to have been sheltered by a divine care, principally with a view to demonstrate the nature of man in his unenlightened state ; the necessity of revelation ; and the contrasted and superior excellency of the Scripture, in which its communications are recorded, above any work of merely human production *.

Independently of the written memorials of the Heathens, which seem occasionally to indicate an acquaintance with the Hebrew Scriptures, there are circumstances, recorded in history, which serve to shew how strong and extensive were the impressions, which resulted from the dispersion of revealed knowledge.

* See Leland's *Paganum ; and Christianity compared*.

The magi, who came to the nativity of Christ, whether from Arabia or Persia, might possibly have formed their expectations from some direct or indirect acquaintance with the promises imparted to the Hebrew prophets*.

The author has sometimes entered into particulars which may at first sight appear not to have any immediate connection with the object of his work, upon examination however they will be found to bear a relation to it, as illustrating the age or country of the several writers, or the circumstances under which they wrote; and as being designed to shew what probability there was that they possessed the means of obtaining sacred information, as well as the influence of the opinions which they held on their lives and characters.

The principal design however of the work is to promote an acquaintance with the evidence of revealed religion, and to excite in the rising generation a more animated reverence for those sacred truths which pervade all time, and which are engraven on every monument of human learning; which prescribe with all

* Numb. xxiv. 17, and Daniel ix. 24. Grotius on Matth. ii. 1, &c.

authority instructions to regulate the course of human life by a divine influence, and to prepare the mind for scenes of eternal happiness.

CHAP. I.

Of the Connection subsisting between the Religious Opinions of different Nations which demonstrates often a common Origin.

UPON every view of the religious opinions and religious rites of antiquity, it will appear that there are general marks of resemblance which pervade the superstitions of Heathen nations, and a conformity of parts in almost every system. Similar notions with respect to the creation of the world, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of a future state, are to be found amongst almost every people; and however the principal events, on which different traditions were founded, may have been disguised, and the leading persuasions of mankind changed or distinguished, a sufficient outline may be drawn from the various records which have been preserved, to establish an original identity as to facts, and a common correspondence as to many fundamental convictions.

This general remark is intended as introductory to the particular details which will be made in the following chapters. In these, it may be expedient to point out in some measure the period and place of the different writers, whose authorities will be produced, and whose opinions will be stated; it will not be necessary, however, to enter into any diffusive dissertations upon these subjects, or to collect from the several works every thing that might be obtained. It would be an endless task to turn over the volumes of antiquity, in order to draw forth every just and reasonable opinion which is to be found among the errors of the Heathen mythology, with respect to the nature of the Supreme Being, the divine origin of the soul, and the dispensations of a future state; and it would be as difficult to attempt in all cases to ascertain how far the convictions which prevailed were derived from tradition, or from an acquaintance with the written doctrines of Scripture. In searching the mines of antiquity, we must be satisfied with a few remnants of sacred ore recovered from amidst the dross. Some glittering fragments are every where to be found, and if in many instances the original brightness of the substance has been so

much injured by length of time as to be with difficulty distinguished from amidst the rubbish, we know how liable to be discoloured such scattered materials are where from ignorance of their value, they are left in neglect.

Some of the authors who will be referred to in this part of the work relating to the Assyrians, Phœnicians, and Egyptians, may be thought of obscure name if not of questionable authority. Fragments only of their works are preserved by Josephus, or by Eusebius, and other writers who lived after the establishment of Christianity; but as being appealed to by those writers, they may be allowed to have some weight; exhibiting what was deemed important at the time they were produced, and tending to substantiate the accounts of Scripture. Some of these authors were probably Jews, and some Hellenistical writers, or proselytes, while others perhaps were pagan poets and historians.

It is not very material to our enquiry, nor would it, indeed, be easy to determine whether these authors copied from the Hebrew Scripture, or borrowed information from other authorities which concurred with it. In either case, the testimony of these authors, as far as it goes, contributes to substantiate

the truth of events on which the history of our religion rests its early claims.

The Grecian and Roman writers who composed accounts of their respective nations in later times, retain proofs that the earlier reports confirmed the relations of Scripture ; and modern enquirers, who have taken a general and comprehensive view of the subject, and illustrated the connection between sacred and prophane history, have made out as clear a demonstration of a common origin and early connection as can be expected, in a detail of events so remote.

CHAP. II.

On the Remains of Chaldean History which confirm the sacred Accounts.

THE great antiquity of the Assyrian empire, and the connection, which from the earliest periods subsisted between the inhabitants of Nineveh and Babylon, and the Israelites, must naturally lead us to expect traces of correspondence between those few memorials which are to be found in the fragments of their history still preserved, and the reports of the sacred historians.

Berosus, the Babylonian historian appears to have been a priest of Belus at Babylon, and a native of that city; he wrote a history of the Chaldeans, in three books. When the Macedonians, under Alexander the Great, took possession of Babylon*, he acquired from them the Greek language,

* Tatian cont. Græc. Biblioth. Patrum, vol. i. p. 184. Edit. Paris, 1624.

and quitting Asia, settled at Cos*, and thence removed to Athens, where he became distinguished by his astrological productions, and where a statue was erected to him. His history was collected from ancient records carefully preserved in the temple of Belus †, and was dedicated to Antiochus Soter, king of Syria, who began his reign B. C. 279 ; or, as some suppose, to his son, Antiochus Theos. It was esteemed of high authority by the Orientalists and Greeks. It contained an account of the first ages of the world from the creation, and of the dynasty of the kings who reigned in Chaldea before the flood. The chronology is obscure, and extended beyond all truth and reasonable limits. Josephus and Eusebius have preserved many fragments of it, from the Greek of Alexander Polyhistor, which concur, in some respects, with the accounts of Scripture. There are five books of a spurious history under the name of Berosus, which contradict, in many points, the genuine fragments of Berosus, and which were composed, probably, by a later writer.

* Vitruvius, lib. ix. c. 7. Edit. Amstel. 1549.

† Joseph. contra Apion, lib. i. Varreni censur. in quendam auctorem qui sub falsâ inscriptione Berosi circumfertur. Rom. 1765.

Berosus appears to have given a narrative of the creation of the earth and of the heavens from chaos, of the destruction of mankind by the flood, of the preservation of one family in the ark, of the building of Babel, and of the genealogy of the sons of Noah, which exhibits a resemblance to the relations of Moses, but which is disguised often by fiction. He represents it as a report, that some remains of the ark were to be seen on the Cordyæan mountains in Armenia in his day ; and states that the people were accustomed to scrape the pitch from the planks, and carry it about for an amulet *.

He seems to describe Abraham without naming him, as a † just and great man, who lived among the Chaldeans, in the tenth generation after the deluge, and who was skilled in celestial matters ; and he appears to relate the account of the destruction of Sennacherib's army under Rab-shakeh, stating, in conformity with Scripture ‡, that one hundred and eighty-five thousand men, with

* Joseph. Antiq. lib. i. c. 3. § 6. Edit. Hudson, 1720.
Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 11. Huet. Demon. Prop. 4.
c. 2. § 18. Edit. Paris, 1679.

† Joseph. Ant. lib. i. c. 7.

‡ 2 Kings xix.

their leaders, were exterminated in one night by a pestilential disease, from the Divinity ; and that Sennacherib, panic-struck and agonized by this calamity, fled with the remainder of his force to Nineveh, his capital, where, after a short time, he was slain in his own temple of Arasca (Nisroch,) by the treachery of his elder sons, Adrammelech and Sarasar (Sharezer,) who being driven into banishment for the murder of their father, went into Armenia ; upon which Assarahoddas (Esarhaddon,) succeeded to the kingdom *. He mentions the conquest of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar, the demolition of the temple, the leading away of the Jews to captivity, and the order issued by Cyrus that the temple should be rebuilt, in perfect consistency with the accounts of the sacred historians †.

Eusebius has transmitted to us an extract from the writings of Abydenus, a Greek historian, who probably flourished under one of the first Ptolemys, as relating to the history

* Antiq. lib. x. c. 1 et 2. Biblioth. Patrum, lib. xv. p. 117. Colon 1022.

† Antiq. lib. x. c. 11. Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. i. § 19. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 40. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 392. vol. ii. Edit. Potter.

of the Assyrians and Medes ; in which is an account of Sisithrus, who, when Saturn had foreshewn to him that an abundance of rain should fall, and had directed him to conceal every thing which was contained in his writings upon the subject, at Heliopolis of the Sippari, he, obeying the command of the god, immediately sailed to Armenia, and was involved in the completion of circumstances which had been predicted ; but on the third day, when the storm of rain began to subside, he sent out birds to try whether the land was covered with water : but they finding water every where diffused, and no place whereon to rest, came back to Sisithrus, and after these, others were sent out ; but when he employed them a third time, they were fortunate, for they returned with their wings (or soles of their feet, *ταρσοίς*,) covered with mud. Immediately after, the gods removed him from the sight of men ; but the vessel touching in Armenia, afforded wood to be worn by the inhabitants as amulets against disease.

It is sufficiently clear that this narrative, as well as that of Berosus, is a compiled account

* Euseb. Præp. Evangel. lib. ix. c. 12.

of what is related of the deluge in the Sacred Writings, which were deposited in the city of Jerusalem.

The extract is given in other places by Eusebius and Syncellus more at large, in which Cronus is related to have warned Sisithrus, in a vision, of the flood by which mankind should be destroyed, and directed him to take friends and relations into the vessel; which he did, with all kinds of animals. It appears from all the accounts that the vessel was a covered ark, and that it rested on an inland spot*.

Abydenus relates that “men, confiding in their gigantic strength, and impiously imagining themselves to be superior to the gods, raised up a lofty rampart of towers where afterwards Babylon stood; which, when it mounted to the heavens, was overturned by the winds employed by the gods, and that from the ruins of it Babylon was constructed: he adds, that from that time, men, who had before used one language, were impelled by the gods to speak in various tongues†: and that afterwards a war arose between Saturn and Titan.”

* Euseb. Chron. lib. v. and Syncel. Chronograph. p. 30.

† Euseb. Præp. Evangel. lib. ix. c. 14.

Abydenus gives also some vague accounts of Nebuchadnezzar having prophesied of a Persian mule, who should subject the Babylonians to his yoke : these were founded probably on some knowledge of divine intimation imparted by the prophet Daniel to the Babylonian kings*.

Alexander Polyhistor, a man highly esteemed among the Grecians for his erudition†, has preserved records of different writers, and extracts from their works, which exhibit a remarkable conformity to those accounts, which have received the sacred seal.

Among these is Eupolemus, who mentions the building of Babel by the Giants, the destruction of the tower, and the dispersion of men. He speaks of the distinguished eminence and knowledge of Abraham, of his abode and actions in Phœnicia, of his receiving gifts from Melchisedec, the priest of God, and of his settling in Egypt ; of the king of Egypt being harrassed with plagues on account of Abraham's wife, and of his restoring her to the patriarch. He relates

* Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 41.

† Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 17.

also that Abraham instructed the priests at Heliopolis ; and further that the Babylonians traced up their origin, and that of the Phœnicians and Canaanites, as likewise the descent of the Ethiopians and Egyptians, from the same family. He observes that Atlas, whom the Greeks believed to be the inventor of astrology, was the same as Enoch, the son * of Methusalem ; and that he had learnt all things from the angel of God, the knowledge of which flowed down to later times †.

In his work concerning the Prophecy of Helias (Elijah), he continues a sketch of the history of Joshua, Samuel, David, and Solomon, of the extended dominion of David, and the building of the temple by Solomon ‡. He mentions also Jeremiah and his prophecies §. Clement, of Alexandria, has preserved a fragment from his history of the Jewish kings, in which he speaks of Moses as the first wise man, from whom the rudiments of learning had been derived to the Jews, and from them to the Phœnicians and Greeks ||.

* The father of Methuselah, Gen. v. 21.

† Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 17.

‡ Ibid. lib. ix. c. 30. 34. § Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 39.

|| Clemen. Alexandrinus. Strom. lib. i. § 148. p. 413. Edit. Potter.

Aristæus the Proconnesian, who lived in the time of Cyrus and of Cræsus, about 565 years before Christ, draws a sketch of the history of Job, which agrees with what is related in the Sacred Book under his name *. This writer gives also a description of the temple at Jerusalem †.

Chærilus, an ancient poet, in treating of the nations that fought under Xerxes, mentions a people which

“ With an admirable grace
Brought up the rear, their language Tyrian was,
Themselves unknown; the mountain their abode,
By Solymis that near a vast lake stood;
Their hair cut round, and their heads covered o’er
With head pieces of tann’d horse hides they wore ‡.”

* Præp. lib. ix. c. 25. † Ibid. lib. ix. c. 38.

‡ Joseph cont. Apion. lib. i. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 9. It seems probable, that this description refers to the Jews, though Bochart supposes it to apply to the Solymi in the neighbourhood of Cilicia. Vide Chanaan, Part II. lib. i. c. 2.

CHAP. III.

On Zoroastres and the Religion of the ancient Persians.

ZOROASTER, or Zoroastres, or Zerdusht, who was regarded as the great institutor or reformer of the Persian religion, was one of the earliest and most distinguished teachers of mankind among the heathens.

There have been many persons of this name*, and much confusion has been introduced concerning the age in which the original Zoroastres lived†. Some place him in the shade of remote antiquity, supposing him to have lived six hundred years before Xerxes passed into Europe‡; others carry him back almost to the time of the flood. More probable accounts, however, represent him to have flourished towards the conclusion of the empire of the Medes, to have

* Stanley's Lives of the Philosophers, part xiv. c. 2.

† Suidas. Plutarch, Isis. et Osirid. Pliny, lib. xxx. c. 1.

‡ Diogen. Laert. Proem. p. 2. Edit. Stephan. 1688.

enjoyed the favour of Cyrus, and to have established his religion in the time of Darius Hystaspes* ; though others, indeed, consider the contemporary of Darius as a second Zoroastres, who introduced temples in which the sacred fire was preserved. Clement of Alexandria states that Pythagoras, (who adopted many of the precepts of Zoroastres,) described him as one of the Persian Magi † ; Suidas speaks of him as a Chaldean or Perso-Median, who wrote on mathematics. The actions of many different persons seem occasionally to have been ascribed to the original character, his name having been afterwards applied to eminent persons as an honourable distinction. Plutarch represents him to have taught magic to the Persians ‡, confirming his pretensions to be regarded as the person who introduced science and philosophy among them. Zoroastres appears to have been indebted to the Mosaic and prophetic writings for much of the information which he

* Hyde de Rel. vet. Pers. p. 277. 292. 312. 318. Prideaux, Con. Part I. b. iv. Richardson, Diss. p. 74.

† Strom. lib. i. p. 357, vol. i. Edit. Potter, 1715. L'Abbé Foucher, Traité historique de la Religion des Perses, tom. xxv. Hist. de l'Academ. des Inscriptions.

‡ De Isid. et Osirid.

possessed, and for an acquaintance with those doctrines which he communicated with his instructions to his followers. From the knowledge which he displays of the religion and customs of the Israelites, some have conceived that he was a Jew, and a very strong and general persuasion has prevailed that he was an inmate with one of the Jewish prophets, or of Ezra, and possibly he might have lived with one of those who partook of the captivity, as with Daniel or Ezekiel, who prophesied in Assyria, rather than with Jeremiah, who during that period remained in Judea.

There are some circumstances, indeed, recorded of the life of Zoroastres, which seem to be borrowed from the history of Daniel, particularly with respect to his being exposed to danger from the persecutions of his enemies, and after a miraculous deliverance, restored to favour with his sovereign.

The Arabian authors, some of whom assert that he was dismissed from the prophet whom he served, with a leprosy, inflicted as a punishment for having opposed his will, seem to have misapplied to him the circumstances, which are related with respect to Gehazi ;

and some have formed the opinion that he lived with Elijah.

All that appears indisputable is, that he was intimately acquainted with the history and religion of the Jews, and that he availed himself of the information, which he possessed, to support the pretence of inspiration, and to establish his doctrines.

The acquirements of Zoroastres in learning and philosophical knowledge enabled him to obtain a considerable authority. He endeavoured also to strengthen his influence by imitating the circumstances, which had conferred a lustre on the Hebrew legislator, and by pretending to distinctions of divine favour and miraculous powers.

He ascended on a mountain, and there, as he affirmed, he held converse with God, who appeared to him in a flame of fire *, and he afterwards retired to prepare his Institutes in a cave decorated with mystical figures of Mithras, and allegorical devices, to impose on the imaginations of the people ; thus employing a contrivance, afterwards imitated by Pythagoras, Mahomet, and other impostors, and by the Dervises of the East.

* Exod. iii. 2.

After having made his appearance at Xiz in Bactria, or at Ecbatana, and laid the foundations of his religion in Media, he repaired under the countenance of Hystaspes, the father of Darius to Bactria, and took up his abode at Balch, on the river Oxus, on the confines of Persia, India, and Cowaresmia, extending his doctrines through those countries; and thence he went to Susa, where Darius became his convert, and by his example brought over the superior ranks of the Persians to the new religion. Notwithstanding the opposition of the Sabians, it soon became the religion of the country, with public institutions and sacred edifices, and the order and economy of national establishments and service.

Having effected this, Zoroastres settled himself as the spiritual head of the institution, which he had set up, and governing with patriarchal and almost regal power in Bactria, he is said to have been killed by a King of the Oriental Sabians, who resisted his attempts to convert him. Darius avenged his death, and continued to support his institutions, which indeed maintained their ascendancy in the East through many ages.

Many stories are related of him not worth

repeating, and the veneration for his memory was carried so far, that Plato did not scruple to assert, that after his body had been burnt on the funeral pile, he had risen again on the twelfth day *.

The institutions of Zoroastres were superseded by those of Mahomet. The sect of the Magians, however, still professes to use his liturgy and prayers, extracted from the first part of the Zend-Avesta, repeating them in a language not understood. Its adherents consist chiefly of the lower and menial classes of society, who are stigmatized as Giaours, or Infidels, by the Mahometans. In consequence of a severe persecution which the Magians experienced from the Moslems, they fled in dispersion to different parts, and established themselves, towards the conclusion of the eighth century, in the province of Guzzerat, where their descendants, called Parsis, still exist as a distinct community, while another colony of them lives under the protection of the British government at Bombay †.

* De Repub. xvi. 10. Clemens, Alexand. Strom. lib. v. § 255. vol. ii. p. 711. Edit. Potter. 1715.

† Ovington's Travels.

The Zend-Avesta, which word has been thought to mean the fire-kindler, and to bear allusion to the mode of kindling fire, by rubbing two bits of cane together, which prevailed among the Persians, is the title of the sacred book which Zoroastres composed, and which contained his pretended revelations *. When presented to Darius it was bound in twelve rolls, and consisted of 100 skins of vellum. Some say, that copies are still preserved by the sect of the Magians, in their oratories and fire-temples, written in the old Persian language and character; whilst modern Persian scholars affirm, that all remains of it have perished, and that the Parsis of Guzerat acknowledge that, so far from now possessing the ancient books of Zoroastres, they have not so much as one single copy saved by their ancestors from the general wreck in the seventh century; the formularies which they now use, being only transcripts of a translation by one of the Parsi Destours, or Priests, who lived three or four centuries since.

*. Plutarchi de Isid. et Osirid et Euseb. Prid. Con. vol. i. b. iv. p. 167. Some understand the expression Zend-Avesta to mean the "living word."

The learned Hyde, in his history of the ancient Persians, endeavours to establish from various authorities the proofs of the preservation of many of the doctrines of the Patriarchal faith, and of the adoption of sacred precepts and rites into the religion of that people, and he was in possession of some manuscripts, which he considered as fragments of the works of Zoroastres*, and published extracts from them. Upon his statements is grounded much of what is here adduced, with respect to the tenets and institutions of that distinguished Legislator. It is to be regretted, that his proposals to publish an entire translation of what he possessed was not encouraged. He himself described the book of the Sad-der (of which he published the Introduction and Conclusion) as a compendium of the precepts and rules of Zoroastres, made for the use of the Church of the Magi, composed in verse by a Parsi Destour (Priest), who lived about two hundred years before the time of Hyde.

Richardson speaks with great contempt of the manuscripts of Zoroastres†; nevertheless,

* Hist. Relig. vet. Persarum.

† Richardson's Dissert. prefixed to Persian Dictionary, P. 4—7.

what Hyde has represented to be the doctrines of Zoroastres is confirmed by many testimonies, and agrees with the general reports of ancient writers upon the subject; and if the fragments and copies which remain, were compositions of a spurious nature and modern date, they were probably fabricated in conformity to the best established accounts. It is said that the whole Zend-Avesta was brought from India by Mr. Fraser, and deposited in the Radcliffe Library, at Oxford: if satisfactory proofs exist of the authenticity of the work, there can be little doubt that the learning and munificence of the present age might, under such auspices, procure a translation.

The publication of Anquetil du Perron, oriental interpreter to the King of France, who professes to give a translation of the whole Zend-Avesta, is declared also by Mr. Richardson to bear palpable marks of a total or at least of a partial fabrication, produced in modern times. It is interspersed with Arabic words, which were not introduced into the Persian language till the seventh century. There are, however, some writers, among whom Kleuker may be particularly mentioned, who contend that it has consi-

derable claims to be regarded as a genuine work.

Hyde supposes the original doctrine of the Persian religion to have been framed in conformity to the primeval simplicity of the faith of Shem, and to have inculcated a belief in the Supreme Being, and the assurance of a future judgment.

He is of opinion, that this faith after having been corrupted, was brought back to its genuine spirit by Abraham, and afterwards again depraved by additions, particularly by Sabianism, which introduced an undue veneration for the heavenly bodies and elements, a superstition against which Moses had cautioned the Israelites before, and from which Job declared himself free *.

Zoroastres and his followers continued, however, to reverence the sun as the Throne of God, on which he sat with apparent majesty ; and, as the Jews beheld the Shechinah, or Divine Glory, in their temples, and preserved the sacred fire on their altars, he and his followers bent before the holy flame which he professed to have obtained from the fire out of which God addressed him, and

* Job xxxi. 26, 27.

which he brought to Xiz, whence it was propagated to other altars. This fire was fed incessantly with wood stripped of its bark, and even the breath of the priests was not allowed to blow upon it*, so that they approached it with their mouths covered. The superstitious reverence for fire spread to the Greeks and Romans, among whom a sacred flame was preserved by priests and vestals. It is probable that the worship of fire was founded on a knowledge of the fact, that God had appeared to Moses in the fire in the bush †.

The manner in which the Persians expressed their veneration for the sun and the elements, seems described by Ezekiel, where he declares himself to have beheld in vision
 “ at the door of the Temple of the Lord,
 “ between the porch and the altar, about five
 “ and twenty men, with their backs toward
 “ the Temple of the Lord, and their faces toward
 “ wards the East, and they worshipped the
 “ sun towards the East ‡.”

The Persians originally believing that the Divine Nature was not to be circumscribed by walls, worshipped the Divinity in the

* Strabo, lib. xv. p. 1010. Edit. Falconer.

† Exod. iii. 2—4.

‡ Ezek. viii. 16. M. Foucher *Traité Histor. Acad. des Inscrit.* vol. xxv. p. 113.

open air and on high places, having neither temples or statues. Zoroastres, however, built every where temples to cover the altars on which the sacred fire was cherished. It appears, therefore, that though this ancient people had preserved some traditional knowledge of the patriarchal faith, yet, in many instances, they had changed its doctrines, particularly with respect to the nature and attributes of God ; thus, instead of worshipping exclusively one great and eternal Being, they revered two independent principles, one of good, the other of evil ; the former, according to Aristotle, called Oromasdes, and by the Greeks, Jupiter ; the second Arimanes and Orcus. Zoroastres corrected these errors, by teaching that both these principles were subject to the Supreme God, the Creator of light and darkness*, being acquainted possibly with what Isaiah had declared of God, “ that he formed light, “ and created darkness—he made peace, and “ created evil †.” Words directed (prophetically) as Prideaux has observed, to Cyrus ; and intended, in his opinion, to refer to the Magians, whom he supposes to

* Pococke and Hyde, c. ix. Prideaux, Part I. Book iv.

† Isaiah xlv. 7.

have existed as a corrupt sect in the time of Cyrus, and to have been reformed by Zoroastres *.

In order to avoid the difficulty of considering God as the author of evil, Zoroastres represents it not as originally created, but as resulting from the defect of good, inculcating a doctrine so far consistent with the facts related by Moses, concerning the fall; but which is mingled with other notions, in which truth and falsehood are blended. He supposes the world to have been created by two distinct agents, the one, the angel of light, the other, the angel of darkness, subordinate indeed to the Supreme Being, but forming all things by a mixture of light and darkness; waging a perpetual contest with each other, which will terminate only with the end of the world; when a general resurrection and day of retribution shall take place, and the angel of darkness and his followers shall be condemned to eternal suffering, but the angel of light and his followers shall be separated to eternal reward.

* Berosus states that the Persians worshipped images. Clem. Alex. Cohort. ad Gent. oper. Vol. ii. p. 57. Edit. Potter.

The works of Zoroastres, judging of them not only from the fragments of Hyde, but from other accounts, appear to have indicated an acquaintance with many other particulars of Revelation and Sacred History*.

In treating of the Creation, he supposed it to have been completed in six periods, composing three hundred and sixty-five days. He spoke of the Deluge, of Joseph, of Moses, and of Solomon; and he borrowed many precepts from the Hebrew Legislator, with relation to clean and unclean beasts, purification, the priesthood, and tithes. He transcribed much from the Psalms of David, and inculcated the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, of a resurrection, and of a final judgment, with an assurance derived probably from the writings of Daniel†, and other prophets.

Amidst the precepts of wisdom interspersed through the works of Zoroastres, were laws framed with unworthy views, as those which seem designed to countenance the incestuous marriages of the Sovereigns of the East;

* Pococke, *Specim. Hist. Arab.*—Hyde *Præfat.* p. 5. and *Prid.* Part I. Book iv. *Mem. de l'Academ. des Belles Lettres*, Tom. xxvii.

† Chap. xii. 2, 3.

and others on the subject of wine, which gave great offence, and led probably to some of the regulations of Mahomet upon that subject.

The general character, however, of the religion, improved as it was by the intermixture of revealed instruction, justly raised its reputation, and the reverence maintained for it by the Persians procured to them the praise of a religious people.

It is probable that many of the sublime sentiments of piety, which, according to Xenophon, enlightened the mind and regulated the conduct of Cyrus, and which led him to favour the Jews, were originally deduced from the Hebrew prophets, and possibly recommended to the Persian Monarch by the writings of Zoroastres. It was the wisdom also infused from them into the system of Zoroastres, which rendered his religion an object of choice to Pythagoras, and conferred upon it a reputation which led Numa to imitate his modes of obtaining communications with some pretended Deity.

It appears then that there may be some reason to think that Zoroastres, who possibly was only a temporary adherent to one of the Hebrew prophets, was rendered instrumental by

Providence to a renewal of some of the obliterated characters of the patriarchal faith, and permitted to receive and impart to the Heathens, a restoration of some of those great doctrines which were first revealed by God as the fundamental principles of all true religion, and from which there could be no departure, without a proportionate deviation from the standard of immutable truth*. Such a supposition does not imply that any countenance was given to the personal views or erroneous tenets of the Persian prophet. It presumes only that a testimony was drawn from time to time, even from the mouth of those whose ways were perverse before God, to the excellency of the doctrines which formed the basis of all natural and revealed religion, and upon which whatever is esteemed good among the superstitions of antiquity must ultimately rest. These doctrines renewed in divers manners were confirmed by divine authority, and with encreasing clearness, to the Jews, and were displayed with full manifestation at the coming of Christ.

* Shahristani de Religion Oriental Diogen. Laert. in Procem. Plutarch de Isid. et Osirid.

Previously to that time, the Gentile nations, however left to walk in their own ways, obtained occasional notices of God. The exertions of Zoroastres certainly meliorated the character of a religion, which for ages was to maintain its influence in the Eastern world. There is even some reason to believe, that he was enabled, by the convictions which he derived from authentic information, to carry on the views of his followers to the expectation of that future Prophet and Sovereign, who was to enlighten and govern the world with righteousness and peace, and whose star the wise men among the descendants of his countrymen were at length enabled to behold.

The early heretics of the Christian Church professed to be in possession of some revelations concerning Christ, imparted, as they alleged, to Zoroastres: Porphyry exposed these as forgeries.

Abul-Pharagius however tells us, that Zoroastres foretold to his Magians, the coming of the Messiah, and the appearance of the Star at his Nativity, which he instructed them to follow when it should be seen, and to offer their gifts and adoration to the

person to whom it should conduct them. It is added, that in conformity to this direction, the wise men repaired to Bethlehem*. Others attribute these prophetic intimations to Balaam.

These accounts, it must be acknowledged, are of a legendary nature, built possibly upon oral communications of what the Scriptures revealed. There is sufficient reason however to believe, that both Balaam and Zoroastres contributed to excite and keep alive the expectation of the Messiah; and that God so far constrained these aliens to act in his service, with design, possibly, to draw truth from the mouth of deception and error, and to render even false witnesses subservient to its establishment.

Zoroastres, and Mahomet who propagated his imposture over the same countries, bore testimony to the authority of the Jewish prophets, and if the former foretold, the latter admitted the claims of Christ, as a prophet.

Suidas attributes to Zoroastres four books on Nature, and other works, which have perished, excepting some fragments preserved by Eusebius.

* Hyde de Relig. vet. Persar. c. xxxi. p. 382.

Some pretended oracles of Zoroastres have been collected from Proclus, Simplicius, Damascius, and others, which were, probably, fabricated by the Platonic writers subsequent to the time of Christ*.

* Chrysostom. Vit. Babyl. Martyr. Stanley's Lives of the Philosophers, Part XIX. c. iii.

CHAP. IV.

On the Phœnicians and Sanchoniathos.

THE Phœnicians lived in a country so immediately contiguous to Judæa, that they had the most direct means of knowing the events which concerned the Jews, and of becoming acquainted with the books which they respected.

Sanchoniathos, a native of Tyre, or of Berytus, is the author of greatest antiquity among the Phœnicians, of whose writings we have any remains. He has transmitted accounts which go back to very early times, and which retain some memorials of truth. His name, indeed, in the Phœnician language, signifies the friend of truth. The original work is now lost, and what we possess is a Greek translation of it made by Philo-Byblius, in the time of Adrian.

Porphry, as we learn from Eusebius, supposed Sanchoniathos to have lived in the reign of Semiramis, who preceded the Tro-

jan war nearly eight centuries; but this could not be the case, as 'Tyre, according to his account, was built not above ninety years before the destruction of 'Troy, and probably Sanchoniatho, agreeably to the opinion of Suidas, lived about that time*. Huet thinks that he was a contemporary of Gideon†. Sanchoniatho is said to have collected his history from the records of towns and temples. It was contained in nine books, though Porphyry mentions only eight, probably not reckoning the first, which related to the Phœnician theology. The authenticity of Sanchoniatho's work was not questioned by Philo-Byblius, Porphyry, or Eusebius, but it has been disputed by Dodwell. Receiving what we possess, with that degree of consideration to which Bishop Cumberland esteems it to be entitled, as containing the fragments of a genuine history, we may examine its resemblance to the Mosaic account‡, which indeed furnished Porphyry

* Præp. Evan. lib. i. c. 9. p. 31. and lib. x. c. 9. p. 485. Edit. Paris, 1628.

† Demon. Evan. Prop. 4. c. 2. § 2. pp. 42, 43. 57. Prop. 4. c. 3. § 2. p. 58. Prop. 4. c. 12. § 1. p. 131. Prop. 4. c. 2. § 54. p. 55. Prop. 4. § 6. p. 158. Edit. Paris, 1769.

‡ Selden de Diis. Syris. Bochart. Chanaan, lib. ii. c. 2. p. 733. lib. ii. c. 17. p. 85. Edit. 1646.

with ground for defending the authority of the work.

Upon a view of the statements of this historian, we discover, under vague and figurative representations, a description of the creation of the world. He speaks of a dark and windy air, and of a turbulent evening chaos, with some allusion it might seem to the spirit of God which moved on the face of the waters, and to the dark void and formless deep. He mentions also the two first mortals, whom he calls *Æon* and *Protogonus*, who gathered food from trees in a manner which seems to bear some reference to particulars recorded of Adam and Eve, and of their transgression. Cumberland also supposes, that, in the account of the line of Genus, whom he conceives to be Cain, *Sanchoniatho* preserved the history of the idolatrous line, as Moses did that of Seth. *Porphry* affirms that *Sanchoniatho* received information from *Jerubbaal* or *Gideon*. He had not, however, any desire to confirm the Sacred Accounts, but rather wrote with an Atheistical design, following *Thoth*, a King of Egypt, into the foulest corruption of Heathenism, which is a neglect of the Sovereign and only true God, the Creator and Go-

vernor of the world. “ He missed, therefore, the foundation of all true natural religion, which is love and obedience to God as the founder and supporter of our being, to be expressed not only in silent thoughts, but in open solemn prayers and thanksgivings, joined with constant and public profession of his truth and worship, and universal justice and charity to mankind*.”

Sanchoniatho, being addicted to idolatry, omits all mention of the deluge and of other signal judgments of God. Instead of speaking of these, he prepared the ground for the vain and foolish religion of the Phœnicians and Egyptians, who worshipped the creature, rather than the Creator, God, blessed for evermore. Sketches from his cosmogony seem afterwards to have been borrowed by Orpheus, Hesiod, and others.

This writer affords some light, in other instances, into the origin of idolatry, and the foundation of many cities ; and he gives an outline of several generations and families, in which some remnants of truth may be discovered, amidst many wild and extravagant relations ; serving to illustrate, by a dark

* Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 11.

contrast, the advantage which we derive from that clear and interesting narrative of the creation and of past ages, which Moses has prefixed as an introduction to his law.

Sanchoniatho gives a very remarkable account of Cronus having offered up his son in sacrifice to his father, Ouranus*. Bochart supposes this to have been borrowed from the relation in Scripture of Abraham having prepared to immolate Isaac. Gro-tius†, however, and Cumberland‡, dispute this opinion: the latter imagines Abraham's trial, in this instance, to have been designed to shew, that God requires his servants to love him above their nearest relations; but that he abhors the sacrifice of their children, and therefore sent his angel to interdict it. This design is not inconsistent with the conviction so generally and justly entertained, that the whole was intended, by a prophetic scene, to represent the future circumstances of the Sacrifice of Christ.

It is possible, that Satan, who seems to have perverted every religious rite to the utmost of his power, endeavoured to render

* Cumberland, Sanchon. Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. iv. c. 14.

† De Veritat. lib. i. Annot.

‡ Remarks on Hist. Remark 3.

sacrificial appointments mischievous in their nature, and subservient to the exciting, of erroneous apprehensions, instead of Faith in the great Sacrifice to be offered up by Christ.

The Heathen nations certainly abused the Institution, by attaching an efficacy to the type, which belonged only to the atonement to be made by Christ; and they introduced the most cruel and abominable custom of human sacrifices, even that of immolating their own children.

The Canaanites were cast out for this among other offences, and laws were enacted against it by Moses*.

It is said by Sanchoniatho, that Cronus, who, by some writers, is supposed to have been Abraham, offered up his son, in agreement with an ancient practice of princes †. It is wonderful that so barbarous a custom, existing thus early, should have continued so long as it appears to have done. Some have imagined that it was in conformity with the false persuasions which prevailed upon this subject, that Agamemnon designed to offer

* Levit. xviii. 21. Deut. xii. 31. See also Isaiah lvii. 5.

† Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. i. c. 10. p. 38.

up Iphigenia ; others suppose this to have been a perverted account, framed on the sacred relation of the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter.

The accounts collected by Sanchoniatho are confirmed by Eratosthenes, the learned librarian of Alexandria, under Ptolemy Euergetes, of whose writings there are some remains *. Hestiaëus also, and Hieronymus, present us with some particulars of the history of Phœnicia, which accord with the truth.

Josephus speaks of copies extant among the Tyrians in his time, of the letters which passed between Hiram and Solomon ; and he appeals to Dios, whom he states to have been a Phœnician historian, of undisputed credit, in confirmation of the account that Hiram went up to Mount Libanus, to cut wood for temples, and that Solomon interchanged problems with Hiram for solution †.

Nicolaus, of Damascus, affords some accounts which deserve attention : we know little more of him than that he was a distinguished advocate, and that he pleaded for

* Published at Oxford, in 1672.

† Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2. Cont. Apion. lib. i. § 17.

the Jews in a cause which was heard before Marcus Agrippa, and upon other important occasions. In the fourth book of his history, he mentions Abraham as coming from beyond Babylon, and reigning in Damascus, and afterwards removing to Judæa: he states, that the name of the patriarch was celebrated every where in the country of Damascus, and that a town existed which went by the name of Abraham; that afterwards upon a famine, in Canaan, he settled in Egypt, and communicated instruction to the people in religion, arithmetic, and astronomy*.

Alexander Polyhistor represents Artapanus likewise to have related, that Abraham went from Syria to Egypt, and remained there twenty years, teaching the Egyptians astronomy†.

Alexander Polyhistor mentions, also, that Melo, who wrote against the Jews, stated, that Abraham sojourned in the desert and had two wives; and that, of the one who had been an Egyptian slave, he begat twelve children, who divided Arabia and became

* Joseph. Antiq. lib. i. c. 7. See also Euseb. Præp. lib. ix. c. 16.

† Euseb. Præp. lib. ix, c. 18.

princes of that country; that, of his legitimate wife, he begat a son, called Laughter, (γέλῳα) *, who, when Abraham was dead, begat twelve sons, of whom the youngest was named Joseph, from whom Moses is reckoned the third in descent. Polyhistor adds, that Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son, and that he immediately, taking him to a mountain, prepared a pile and set him on it, but, being about to slay him, he was forbidden by an angel, who furnished a ram to him for an oblation, and that Abraham drew his son from the pile and sacrificed the ram †.

The same author gives a great part of the history of Jacob and Esau, and of the birth of the twelve Patriarchs, particularly of Joseph, from Demetrius, so as to exhibit an abridgment of the sacred history, though he extends the period from Adam to the removal into Egypt, to 3624 years, and differs from Scripture in some particulars ‡.

Demetrius also mentions events in the life of Moses, as of his killing the Egyptian, and marrying Zipporah §; and Alexander

* Gen. xviii. 12. The name "Isaac," means laughter.

† Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 19.

‡ Ibid. lib. ix. c. 21. § Ibid. lib. ix. c. 29.

Polyhistor relates, that Theodotus speaks of the fruitfulness of Judæa, of the coming of Jacob into Mesopotamia, of his two marriages and removal to Canaan, of the treatment which Dinah experienced, and its consequences *.

Menander, the Ephesian, relates that Hiram went up to Libanus to cut down cedar for temples: but he speaks of the temples as being dedicated to Heathen deities. He mentions also the employing of a young man, called Abdeemon, to expound the riddles of Solomon †.

* Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 22.

† Joseph. lib. viii. c. 5.

CHAP. V.

*Of the Connection which subsisted between the
Jews and the Egyptians.*

EGYPT was probably colonized in part before the dispersion of mankind took place, from the plains of Shinar. Mizraim, the son of Ham, is generally considered as having first established a settlement there.

The Israelites, who took up their abode in Egypt with Jacob, continued there, four hundred and fifteen years, completing, according to Josephus, a period of four hundred and thirty years from Abraham's arrival in Canaan*. From the account which Moses gives of the departure of this people from their bondage, it appears, that all the descendants of Jacob at that time quitted the country, young and old, sons and daughters†, and with them a mixed multitude‡.

By the law of Moses to his people it was directed that they should look with some fa-

* Exod. xii. 40. Joseph. Antiq. lib. ii. c. 14.

† Exod. x. 9. xii. 31, 32.

‡ Ibid. xii. 38.

vour on the Egyptians*, and the children of the third generation of Egyptian origin were to be allowed to enter the congregation; but it was ordained also that when a king should be established among the Israelites “ he
 “ should not cause the people to return to
 “ Egypt, to the end that he should multiply
 “ horses, forasmuch as the Lord had said,
 “ henceforth ye shall return no more that
 “ way †.”

The Egyptians had been highly distinguished for their wisdom from the earliest period ‡. Their great attainments in knowledge, and advancement in arts and sciences are every where celebrated by sacred and profane writers; but their persuasions on subjects of religion, appear to have been in general, erroneous and absurd. Many of the precepts of the Mosaic law were directed against their customs.

The people became so corrupt in later times, that the prophet predicted their destruction, from the infatuation which they manifested, declaring that they should become the basest of the kingdoms, and no more exalt themselves among the nations §.

* Deut. xxiii. 7, 8.

† Deut. xvii. 16, 17.

‡ Herod. lib. ii. c. 121. 160.

§ Ezek. xxix. 14, 15.

Previously to the time of Solomon an occasional intercourse subsisted between the two countries, notwithstanding the prohibitions upon the subject delivered by the Almighty.

Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and married his daughter*, laying the foundation of his misery in disobedience; and under subsequent reigns, Egyptians were admitted into Canaan, in order to contribute to its defence.

The Jews also were carried into Egypt at different times when conquered by the armies of that country, and occasional emigrations of the people took place under circumstances of dissension, as particularly in the civil wars of the Asmoneans, which drove many of them into exile. Alexander, when he built Alexandria, transported many Jews from their own country to people his new city, and encouraged others to establish themselves there, by conceding to them considerable privileges, particularly that of appointing their own magistrates†, and many were at the

* 1 Kings iii. 1.

† Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. ii. De Bel. Jud. lib. ii. c. 18. 26. Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 12. Philo legat. lib. ii. c. 8.

same time dispersed into other cities of Egypt.

These greatly increased, and maintaining at Alexandria, and other places, a constant intercourse with the Greeks who resorted to Egypt, they acquired a knowledge of that language, and were called Hellenistic Jews or Grecians *, being sometimes regarded as schismatics by their own countrymen.

The Jews had synagogues in Egypt, and in every place, indeed, in which ten persons of full age and free condition were to be found †.

Several successive kings of Egypt are related to have carried the inhabitants of Judæa into Egypt, taken in different expeditions; and Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, in particular, about the year 312 before Christ, took with him in his retreat from Phœnicia, many to whose fidelity he committed the strong places of his kingdom, and some of whom he placed in Lybia about Cyrene, knowing that he could confide in their oath; and among others whom he carried away was Hezechias, an eminent person, and high

* Acts vi. 1.

† Megill. c. 1. § 3. Maimon in Tephil. Lightfoot, et Talm. Exert. in Matth. iv. c. 23.

priest of the Jews, mentioned by Hecataeus, then with Ptolemy, as a man of great wisdom, from whom he had derived information concerning the religion, manners, and policy of the Jews *.

Ptolemy Euergetes offered up sacrifices at Jerusalem for the victories which he had obtained over the king of Syria, having perhaps read, as Prideaux supposes, the prophecies of Daniel relating to those victories †.

The repulse of Ptolemy Philopater, who in his progress through Judæa attempted at Jerusalem to enter the Holy of Holies, and persisting in spite of the remonstrance of the high priest, was smitten, must have excited much attention ‡, particularly as the hardened king on his return to Alexandria persecuted the Jews, endeavouring to make them apostatize, or to exterminate them.

Ptolemy, called Philometor, and his queen Cleopatra, committed the management of important affairs in Egypt to Jews, one of whom,

* Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. viii. c. 9, 10. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. 2. l. 11. c. 8. Origen cont. Cels. lib. 1.

† Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. ii. § 5.

‡ 3 Maccab. c. 1.

namely, Onias, obtained permission from the king and queen to build a temple for the Jews at Hierapolis in Egypt, like that at Jerusalem*, alleging the prophecy of Jeremiah, that there should be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt; and the king and queen in their rescript speak honourably of the law and of Isaiah†. Divine service was continued in this temple till the time of Vespasian, when it was suppressed by that emperor's order: previously, however, to that time, it is probable that many of the Egyptian Jews went up to Jerusalem on great solemnities‡.

The Septuagint version, before mentioned, afforded for near three centuries before the time of Christ a facility to the various people, who resorted to Egypt, of becoming acquainted with the sacred oracles, and we know that it attracted attention. Aristobulus is related to have written a commentary on it, which he dedicated to the king||, and the

* Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. vii. c. 10. and Prideaux, Part II. book iv.

† Newton on the Prophecies, vol. i. c. 12. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i.

‡ Acts ii. 10. viii. 27.

|| Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. iii. c. 12. Huet. Demon. Evan. Prop. iv. c. 2. § 25. p. 50.

Jews and their laws must have been objects of very general attention in Egypt, since Philo relates, that in his time they amounted to a hundred myriads, or one million, and they probably had a full council, or great synagogue in that country *.

The Egyptians themselves from the earliest times could not but be awfully impressed with the religious communications imparted to the Israelites, and with the miraculous sanctions by which those communications were confirmed; a considerable aversion, however, was entertained by the Egyptians against the Jews, excited probably by the great difference subsisting between them on the subject of religion †.

Events of the Jewish history, even from the most remote times, were not only reported amongst the Egyptians by tradition, but were recorded, it should seem, in their public annals, as for instance, it was related in the books of the priests that an Egyptian was killed by the words of Moses ‡: not to mention that the early writers, who treat

* See in Flacc. p. 971.

† Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. i. § 25. Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 5.

‡ Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 413. Edit. Potter. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 27.

of their history and religion, notice particulars with respect to the contest of the giants with the gods, and other particulars, which bear a relation to events mentioned in Scripture.

The accounts also which are abridged by Justin from Troqus Pompeius, concerning Joseph and Moses, in which truth and falsehood are mixed together, were probably derived by the original writer from the Egyptian priests *.

* See Justin. lib. xxxvi. c. 2. p. 530. Edit. Wetsten.

CHAP. VI.

Hermes Trismegistus.

ONE of the first, if not the first of the distinguished writers among the Egyptians, and to whom they attributed their earliest discoveries in the sciences, was Hermes, a legislator, poet, and philosopher, who is reported to have lived before the time of Moses, and who seems by some to have been confounded with Joseph or Enoch; while by others it is maintained, that Moses himself* is denoted by that name. He is styled Trismegistus in allusion, probably, to his eminent attainments, though Suidas represents him to have procured that title from the reputation which he acquired by promulgating some doctrines concerning the divine nature and the Trinity. Some have imagined, that he or an earlier Hermes was deified as the Egyptian Mercury. It is related by Sanchoniatho, that he was an as-

* Kircher, tom. i. Œdip. Egypt, p. 67. 79. 114.

sistant of Cronus, whom Cumberland maintains to have been Ham, he is sometimes described as a contemporary of Osiris, whom the same learned writer supposes to have been Misraim*, and is said to have composed many works on theology, two of which, containing hymns and precepts of elevated instruction, were carried in religious processions in Egypt, from which Sanchoniatho and Manetho borrowed much relating to the first creation of the world †.

From the various accounts which may be collected of him and his writings, we may conclude, that he had some acquaintance with the principles of the patriarchal theology.

In the cosmogony which is ascribed to him, an unbounded darkness is said to have extended over the abyss of water, and an ætherial Spirit to have blowed with a divine power over the chaos; and further it is stated that holy light was diffused, and the elements raised from a moist sandy substance, while the gods distributed the seminal principles of things.

The productions which are ascribed to

* Cumberland's Remarks, 1st and 2nd.

† Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vi. p. 757.

Hermes contain possibly some remains of his writings, mingled with spurious additions of later times by Platonic or Christian writers *. He speaks of one Supreme Deity †, as the light and life. Lactantius refers to a work of this description, entitled *Pæmander*, with design to shew, that Hermes was not ignorant that men were made by God, and in his similitude.

Lactantius refers also to a passage of this or some other work, in which Hermes describes man as formed of two natures, a mortal and an immortal part, bearing an intermediate character between a divine and immortal nature, and a mortal and changeable one, that seeing all things he might admire all things ‡.

The same writer has preserved some passages from other productions attributed to Hermes, one of which is entitled a *Perfect Discourse*, or the *Asclepian Dialogue* §. Among these is a sentence which states, that

* See Edit. Ficini. Venet. 1495. et ap. Aldum. 1552. See Fabric. Biblioth. Græc.

† Cyprian de Idol. Van. vol. i. and Cudworth's Intellectual System, Book i. c. 4. p. 332. Edit. 1678.

‡ De Vit. Beat. lib. vii. § 4. p. 658, vol. i. See also Lact. de Origin. Error, lib. ii. § 10. p. 198—9.

§ De Vit. Beat. lib. vii. § 13.

piety or righteousness, (which is described to be the knowledge of God) is the only protection, and that neither the evil spirit, or fate, have power over the righteous man, for that God defends him from every evil, and that righteousness is the only good thing in man. A sentence also is cited from the Asclepian Dialogue, in which the author speaks of a time, when the Lord, the Father and God, beholding all things, and balancing good with evil, and purifying all things by water, and sharp fire should at length renovate the world *.

A passage likewise might be mentioned, which contains a mixture of true and false doctrine, and which was probably attributed to Hermes, by some later writer, since it describes “ the Lord, the creator of all things, “ to have made the second God, visible and “ sensible, whom he formed the first, (begotten) and alone and one; that he appeared to him good and most full of all “ good things; and that God sanctified and “ entirely loved him as his only begotten †.”

* De Vit. Beat. lib. vii. c. 18.

† De Verâ Sapient. lib. iv. § 6. p. 364—5.

CHAP. VII.

*On Hecataeus, Manetho, Artapanus,
and others.*

HECATÆUS, of Abdera, having been trained up with Alexander the Great, appears to have lived with Ptolemy, king of Egypt, the son of Lagus; he gave an account of Abraham, and wrote a work upon the Jews, in which he speaks of the great veneration which they entertained for their laws, so as to endure every torture, and death itself, rather than violate them; and he particularly mentions the patience with which they sustained persecution from the Persian kings and their officers, alluding possibly to accounts related in the book of Daniel. He observes, that Alexander being inclined to rebuild the temple of Bel at Babylon, was opposed by the Jews when he commanded all to co-operate, and being struck with their constancy dismissed them.

He dilates upon the steadiness of the Jews, their great population, and the extent, beauty, and fruitfulness of their country, which he represents to contain about three million of acres, of excellent soil.

He speaks of Jerusalem and of its altars, made of unwrought stones, which no tool had touched; of the golden altar and candlestick, and of the priests who abstained from wine *.

Manetho was an Egyptian writer, a priest of Sebennua, who professed to have translated the history of his own country into the Greek language from sacred writings †, by which some understand the writings of the Egyptian priests, others the Hebrew Scriptures, which he expressly mentions in the same book as the sacred writings of the Israelites, described under the title of *Shepherds* ‡. His history is carried on to the sixteenth year of Artaxerxes Ochus. It was composed by the command of Ptolemy Philadelphus, in whose reign the Sep-

* Euseb. *Præp. Evan.* lib. ix. c. 4. Huet. *Dem. Evan.* Prop. 4. c. 2. Joseph. *cont. Apion*, lib. i. § 14.

† "Εκ τε των ιερῶν, *cont. Apion*, lib. i. § 14. εκ των ιερῶν γραμμάτων, *cont. Apion*, lib. i. § 26.

‡ "Τέτο φουσιν ἔθνης τὰς καλουμένας, ποιμένας, αἰχμαλώτους ἐν ταῖς ἱερῶν αὐτῶν βίβλοις γεγράφθαι," *cont. Apion*, lib. i. § 14.

tuagint version was made. Whatever information Manetho borrowed from the Scriptures, is mixed with erroneous accounts, drawn from corrupt sources, and it has been imagined, that he occasionally transcribed from inscriptions on the pillars of Hercules.

He mentions Moses as a priest, first named Osarsyph, and he represents the people whom he calls Shepherds, to have taken possession of Egypt, and after retaining the power in it for upwards of five hundred years, to have been driven out, by way of the wilderness, into Syria, and for fear of the Assyrians to have retired into Judæa, and there to have built a capacious city, called Jerusalem. Josephus observes, that it may be collected from this statement, that the shepherds left Egypt three hundred and ninety-three years before Danaus went to Argos, and almost a thousand years before the siege of Troy. It appears from the account, that the shepherds are supposed to have been Israelites, an opinion open to many objections. Sir Isaac Newton imagines them to have been the Canaanites, who flying from Joshua took possession of Lower Egypt. There seems, however, to be much probability in the opinion, that the

shepherds had been in Egypt before Jacob removed thither*. Josephus further informs us, that though Manetho professes to have drawn his history from sacred records, he blends some fabulous and unauthorized accounts with it, the falsehood of which is pointed out by Josephus †.

Polemon is supposed to have lived in the time of Ptolemy Epiphanes ‡. Africanus says, that he wrote Grecian histories, alluding probably to a work which Athenæus calls *Ελλησγικον*. In this it was related, that in the reign of Apis, the son of Pharneus, a part of the Egyptian army went out of Egypt and took possession of that part of Syria which is called Palestine not far from Arabia§. Josephus and Eusebius have preserved also remnants of the works of other writers, which confirm the general report of history, that the Jews taking their origin in Assyria settled in Egypt, and afterwards being harassed with servitude came out under the

* Genesis xlv. 34.

† Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. i. § 16. Stillingfleet's Origin. Sacr. Book i. c. 2. § 2.

‡ See Vossius de Hist. Græc.

§ Euseb. Chron. and Grotius. Huet. Dem. Evang. Prop. 4. c. 2. § 26. p. 50.

direction of Moses, and passed by Arabia into Syria. It would be endless to extract all the passages which might be collected from Philo Byblius, Hecatæus, Symmachus, Chæremon, Eupolemus, Demetrius, Megasthenes, and other writers, who will be referred to in this work.

Artapanus, in his book concerning the Jews, represents the Israelites to have been ill treated under a king of Egypt; that Moses was adopted by the daughter of one of the kings of that country, and that he was called (Musæus by the Greeks,) the master of Orpheus; and after many circumstances of questionable authority, he relates the miracles which Moses performed, and states that the priests beyond Memphis, being called in by the king, threw down what appeared to be a serpent, and changed the colour of the river. He mentions the miraculous passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and their wandering forty years in the wilderness, supported by heavenly food.

Artapanus describes Moses to have been of a noble family, of ruddy countenance, with long and white locks, and a dignified presence, and to have performed many mi-

acles * : this writer seems also, from the account of Alexander Polyhistor, to have given the story of Joseph, much of which corresponds with what is related in Scripture †.

Eusebius mentions Ezekiel, a tragic poet, who introduces Moses ; representing his being discovered on the shallow of the river ‡ ; his being educated by the daughter of the king ; his killing and burying the Egyptian ; his watering the flock for Sippora (Zipporah) and marrying her. The same poet records the miraculous circumstance § of the revelation of God to Moses, appointing him to his great commission for the deliverance of the Israelites ; his miracles ; the injunction of the divine legislator as to the observance of the passover, and the particulars of the Exodus ; and he describes, with dramatic effect, the Egyptian soldiers, exclaiming on the banks of the Red Sea, “ Let us fly—God with his
“ powerful right hand covers the Israelites—
“ the passage is closed, and the army is de-
“ stroyed.” He gives also an account of the wonders, and particularly of the pillar, in the wilderness.

* Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 27.

† Ibid. lib. ix. c. 23.

‡ Ibid. lib. ix. c. 28.

§ Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 29.

Polyhistor states, that the Babylonians left the ark with the tables of the law deposited in the hands of Jeremiah *.

* Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 39.

CHAP. VIII.

On the Intercourse which the Grecians enjoyed with the Jews, and the Knowledge they derived from it.

THE Grecian writers, from whom principally we deduce the knowledge of what relates to the Heathen religion and morality, and of the circumstances which respect the origin and history of Pagan nations, have conveyed to us many accounts which, however eloquently described, exhibit much of erroneous persuasion, and much of confused and corrupted tradition.

The earliest information, which they possessed, appears to have been obtained from Egypt and Phœnicia, which countries many of them visited. Herodotus * represents their letters to have been of foreign origin, introduced, according to Grotius †, by Cadmus, about 1498 years before Christ, if we adopt

* Lib. i. c. 57. Grotius, lib. xv. De Veritat. lib. i. c. 15, in the notes.

† Lib. i. c. 58.

the Chronology of Blair; some imagine Cadmus and his followers to have been of the inhabitants of Canaan, who fled when that country was invaded by Joshua; though Josephus disputes these early pretensions, and others ascribe the introduction of letters into Greece to Danaus or Cecrops*. The Grecians themselves, whose vanity was not supported by any information as to their origin, which could claim the sanction of remote antiquity, and who could give but very vague and conjectural accounts with respect to the commencement of many of their chief nations and cities, pretended that the first inhabitants of Hellas were natives of the soil; by which, perhaps, might be meant, either, that history did not afford any record of their first arrival, or that they derived their existence from the stones fabulously related to have been thrown by Deucalion after the flood, and which renewed the race of men.

All that can be confidently affirmed upon

* Isaac Casaubon remarks in his *Adversaria*, that he observed Hebrew words in the most ancient Greek writers, which had ceased to be in use, or were much changed. See Gregory Sharp's *Dissertations upon the Origin and Construction of Languages*. P. 18.

this subject is, that the isles of the Gentiles were first divided by the sons of Javan, the grandson of Noah*, who is supposed to have been the same person with Ion, the ancestor of the Ionians. Bryant observes, that some of the descendants of Nimrod are to be traced to Ionia; and he contends with much ingenuity and learning, for the derivation of many colonies from Egypt, endeavouring to account, by the proofs of an early connection, for the similarity which existed between many of the religious rites of the Egyptians and Grecians†. He supposes the Helladians, (who were called Hellenes from Hellen, the son of Deucalion) to have descended from the (Cuthite) shepherds of Egypt, who are recorded by Josephus to have gone into Greece under the guidance of Danaus, Cecrops, and others‡. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Strabo state, that the

* Gen. x. 1—5. An opinion has been sometimes expressed, that Elishah gave a name to Hellas; and that Tarshish took possession of Achaia, Kittim of Macedonia, and Dodanim of Thessaly and Epirus.

† Diodor. Sicul. §§ 28, 29, and 33, Wetsten. Edit. 1745. and Bryant's *Mythology, and Observations on the Plagues* inflicted on the Egyptians.

‡ Diodor. ex lib. xl. Eclog. I. vol. ii. p. 543. and Zonaras, vol. i. p. 22. See Syncel. p. 102.

Egyptians began to disturb the Pelasgi, who were spread over the north of Greece, two generations before the war of Troy.

The Athenians, Dorians, and Bœotians are severally stated to have deduced their origin from the Pelasgi, (whom Bryant supposes to have been of the Cuthite race), or from colonies of Cuthite extraction at a later period.

Numberless proofs of descent from a common ancestry, occur among these three nations. The evidences of remote connection were retained with strong impression, and manifested themselves at different times.

The notion so commonly expressed among the Greeks of transmitted honours, partly divine and partly human—of an origin in some families derived from an union of the gods with mortals, might probably have taken its rise from the circumstances referred to by Moses, when he relates that the sons of God (that is, possibly, the posterity of Seth) intermixed in marriage with the children of men, (that is, perhaps, the descendants of Cain).

The Athenians were, as Herodotus in his

Urania informs us, first called Cranai, which name Cumberland supposes to be derived from Cronus, or Ham, who probably lived about four centuries after the deluge, and consequently long before the time of Cecrops. Cronus, is said to have moved from Babylon to Phœnicia, and Astarte is considered as his wife. In an account of Eusebius he is reported to have been called Israel. Sanchoniatho relates, that he was circumcised, and that he compelled his auxiliaries to be circumcised also *.

Cumberland imagines that Cronus found some of Japhet's posterity in Attica, and obtained the sovereignty over them. Sanchoniatho observes, that he gave Athens to his daughter, which took its name from her.

The Lacedemonians, who were a people of Titanian origin, are said to have claimed affinity with the Capthorim, a tribe settled in Judea, which some suppose to have been descendants from the earliest inhabitants of Canaan †.

* See Genesis xxxiv. 15.

† See p. 106. The Capthorim descended from Mizraim, Gen. x. 14.

No other accounts which are authentic seem to exist of the establishment of any early communication between the Greeks and the Jews; the entrance of Alexander into Asia opened the means of some intercourse. This monarch, who commenced his undertaking about 334 years before Christ, is reported to have gone up to Jerusalem after the siege and the taking of Tyre, and to have been shown the prophecies of Daniel, which predicted his victories *.

It is related also, by Josephus, that Alexander was so impressed with reverence for the high priest, Jaddua, in consequence of a dream, which he had in Macedonia, in which he appeared to contemplate him, and to be encouraged by the vision to pass over into Asia, with a promise of success; that though he marched to Jerusalem with intention to take vengeance of the Jews for having refused to assist him with provisions, he no sooner beheld Jaddua than he paid homage to him, and upon his entrance into Jerusalem offered sacrifices to Jehovah, and granted many privileges to the Jews, par-

* Dan. vii. 6. viii. 20—22. xi. 3. and Newton on the Prophecies.

ticularly the enjoyment of their religion, and an exemption from tribute in the Sabbatical year*.

This account has been disputed, indeed, by modern writers, but it has been vindicated by Prideaux, Chandler, and others, and admitted even by Bayle; and there are circumstances mentioned in Arrian and Pliny, and other Heathen writers, which tend to confirm the relation †. Justin, in particular, informs us, that Alexander went into Syria, where many princes of the East met him with their mitres ‡, which account, as Vossius observes,

* Joseph. lib. xi. c. 8. De Bello Jud. lib. ii. c. 18. p. 1098. Edit. Hudson.

† Arrian de Exped. Alex. lib. ii. c. 25. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xii. c. 25. § 54. where Pliny states that Alexander was in the district of Jericho, i. e. at a distance of 21 miles only from Jerusalem.

‡ (Infulis.) Hist. lib. xi. c. 10. § 6. The Jewish high priest certainly wore a golden plate, made as a crown, on which the sacred name of Jehovah was engraven, and which was placed on a fillet or mitre. Philo describes it as χρυσῶν πεῖαλον, ὡσανεὶ σιεφανῶς; and he adds, μίτρα δ' ἦν ὑπ' αὐτὸ τῷ μὴ ψάυειν κεφαλῆς το πεῖαλον, πρὸς δὲ καὶ κιδαρὶς κατεσκευαζέτο· κιδαρεῖ γὰρ οἱ τῶν ἑσθῶν βασιλεῖς ἀπὸ Διαδήματος εἰώθασιν χρῆσθαι. De Mos. lib. iii. p. 152. vol. ii. Edit. Mangey; and afterwards, κιδαριν δὲ ἀπὸ Διαδήματος ἐπιτίθησι τῇ κεφαλῇ δ. καίων τὸν ἱερωμένον τῷ Θεῷ καθ' ὃν χρόνον ἱερᾶται προφέρειν ἀπάντων καὶ μὴ μόνον ἰδιωτῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ βασιλέων. Ibid. p. 155. See also Xenoph. de Exped. Cyr. lib. ii.

seems to allude to the circumstances of this story.

It has been remarked, that after the battle of the Granicus, the conqueror manifested a respect for the marriage ties, in a manner which might seem to imply a regard to the precept of the law of Moses, which commanded, that when a man had taken a new wife he should not go out to war*, since Alexander ordered those of his army, who had married that year, to return to Macedonia, to pass the winter with their wives†.

Many of the ancient laws of Attica might be supposed to have been borrowed from the statutes of Moses, as that which Sopater mentions, and to which Terence refers, which directed that the nearest of kindred should marry the widow of a deceased person. The custom, grounded on the principle of this law, seems to have been received with every sanction. Juno was reputed to be the sister as well as the wife of Jove. After the

* Deut. xxiv. 5. Joseph. Antiq. lib. iii. c. 7.

† Prid. Con. Part i. Book vii. Ann. 354. Grot. de Jure Bell. lib. ii. c. 1. § 12. Cornel. Nepos, Vit. Cimon.

death of Paris, Deiphobus is related to have married Helen. Cimon was married to his half-sister Elpinice *.

Another law, which seems to have been borrowed also from the sacred code, enjoined that a priest should marry only a virgin and a citizen †. Others are well known which enforced, in imitation of the Hebrew laws, a reverence for the gods and for parents, and a respect for dead bodies ‡.

The precept, ascribed to Pythagoras by Hermippus, that an ass is not to be passed when it has fallen on its knees, is sometimes supposed to have had its origin from the circumstance of the falling of Balaam's ass, mentioned in Numbers §; but probably only a lesson of humanity was inculcated.

The direction likewise of Jamblicus not to injure a fruit tree belonging to an enemy, should seem to have originated in the humane and considerate commandment of Moses, designed to check the injuries of war by prohibiting the destruction of trees during

* Cornel. Nepos, Vit. Cimon.

† Levit. xxi. 14.

‡ Θεσιμαίων απέχσθαι. Vid. Carm. Pythag.

§ Numb. xxii. 27.

the siege of a city *, which administered to the support of human life.

It may be cursorily observed, that the laws of Lycurgus and Solon, though in some instances improved by the precepts of Moses, illustrate the superiority of the Hebrew code.

There might be the greater disposition to borrow from the laws of Moses, as he was acknowledged to be a lawgiver of great antiquity, and known to have laid claim to the authority of Jehovah †.

Aristobulus tells us that Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato appear to have viewed all the law of Moses with a scrutinizing eye ‡. It has been observed, however, that we must not therefore conclude that these philosophers, who were naturally dazzled with the splendour and distinction which their nations enjoyed, were inclined to believe that God had preferred a people, as the depositaries of his laws, upon whom they looked down with disdainful feelings. The Athenians and other nations used in ancient

* Deut. xx. 19.

† Diodor. Sic. Hist. lib. i. p. 105. Edit. Wetsten.

‡ Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. xiii. c. 12.

times the Mosaic mode of computation by evening and morning, as did also the Druids and ancient Gauls and Germans*. The uniformity indeed, might have resulted from the custom of reckoning by lunar revolutions.

The transmission of knowledge from the Egyptians to the Grecians may be easily traced, and there can be no doubt that through the intercourse with Egypt, and with the cities of Syria, many opportunities were opened to the Greeks of obtaining information from the Jews.

Pythagoras, Thales, Solon, Eudoxus, and Plato, visited Egypt, with many other distinguished Grecians, who raised the reputation of their countries†, and brought back accounts which became gradually blended with their history.

The Greeks had no historian, whose works are now extant, who lived within four hundred years of the Trojan war; and Solon is related to have found, with some surprise, that the names and history of most of the

* Tacit. de Mor. Germ. Cæsar. Comm. &c.

† Diod. Sicul. lib. i. § 98. p. 110. Edit. Wetsten. Clem. Alex. Strom. Edit. Pot. lib. i. p. 356.

Grecian deities had belonged to heroes in Egypt.

Plato represents the Egyptians to have reproached the Grecians as being children ; and Lucian, in one place, alludes to the origin of philosophy from the East, and in another admits that the Greeks derived their convictions as to sacred things from the Egyptians *. Plutarch reports that the Egyptian fables bear some faint and obscure resemblance to the truth ; and we might conclude therefore, from his authority, that much of what appears enveloped in Grecian fables was derived from Egypt. Zonaras states the religious rites of the Greeks to have been borrowed from Egypt, into which country they were introduced from Chaldæa †.

Josephus therefore had sufficient ground to remark, that the Jews were not barely known to the Greeks, or only to the common sort of them, but likewise to their wise men, and to philosophers of the first rank, and with marks too, of singular friendship, and esteem ‡.

* De Dea Syria, a work commonly attributed to Lucian.

† Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. i.

‡ Ibid. lib. i.

The historian has himself supplied us with some proofs of a direct intercourse. He gives an account which is confirmed by the first book of Maccabees, which represents a king of Sparta to have written to Onias, the high priest of the Jews, professing to be descended from Abraham, and claiming the friendship of the Jews; the king is called Darius and Areus in the book of Maccabees*. The letter was probably addressed to Onias the first, who was a contemporary of the sovereign referred to †, and not, as Josephus states, to Onias, the son of Simon ‡.

The ambassadors sent by Jonathan to Rome and Sparta, about 144 years before Christ, addressed themselves to the Spartans as to the allies of the Jews, they alluded to the letter before mentioned as sent to Onias, and expressed sentiments of amity towards the Lacedemonians, which seem to have been well received, and to have been registered in public records §. It appears that

* 1 Maccab. xii. and Usher.

† Scaliger, Animad. in Euseb. p. 139, and Seneca Isagog. lib. iii. p. 340.

‡ Antiq. Lib. xii. c. 4.

§ 1 Maccab. xii. 1—22. xxiv. 22.

two or three years after, upon the death of Jonathan, the Lacedemonians sent to renew the treaty of friendship with Simon*. Hyrcanus received honours from the Athenians, and a decree was made by them in his favour†.

* Ibid. xxiv. 23.

† Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 8. § 5. vol. i. p. 623. edit. Hudson.

CHAP. IX.

On the Intercourse which subsisted between the Romans and the Jews, and on the Means of Information which the former possessed.

THE Romans do not appear, at any early period of their history, to have had immediate and direct intercourse with the Jews, nor did any circumstance then exist which can be supposed to have led to a communication.

Clement of Alexandria, however, states that Numa, the second king of the Romans, supported some doctrines which must have been originally derived from the Hebrew revelation. He appears indeed to have enacted a law grounded on a reverence for the divine nature, similar to what prevailed among the Jews, and which directed, that no one should attempt to express the ineffable name of God. Neither were external representations of the Deity allowed; and for near two centuries from the time of the building of the city, there was no image of any deity, either in

sculpture or painting *. Suidas speaks of an old Tuscan writer, who described the creation in the order which Moses has laid down, representing the six days as six thousand years †.

The Jews, who, in their decline, and amidst the distraction of parties, courted the protection of foreign powers, being desirous to withdraw themselves from subjection to the Syrian kings, turned to the Romans for assistance.

One of the first accounts which we have of an intercourse between the Romans and the Jews, is that of Judas Maccabæus ‡, who, after his victory over Nicanor, about 160 years before Christ, sent the first embassy which took place between the two nations, requesting the Romans, who had manifested a generous detestation of tyranny, to make a league with them, and to interpose in their favour with Demetrius, who harassed them: Eupolemus, the son of John, and Jason, the son of Eleazar, being employed on this occasion. The treaty was ratified by the senate, and written on tables of brass, the ori-

* August. de Civit Dei, lib. iv. c. 31.

† Voce Τυπνρία and Jackson's Chronol. p. 18.

‡ 1 Macc. viii. 17.

ginal being deposited in the capitol*. Before the ambassadors returned, Judas was dead. The league was confirmed to Jonathan, and having been written on brass, was carried to Jerusalem, and read before all the people†. It was afterwards renewed to Hyrcanus.

Pompey, when engaged in a war with Tigranes, had formed an alliance with a party of the Jews by the agency of Scaurus; upon his arrival at Damascus, he received a present from Aristobulus, the second brother of Hyrcanus, of a golden vine of five hundred talents, which Strabo mentions, and which Josephus professes to have seen in the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus‡.

This great conqueror having, by the assistance of a party in Jerusalem, introduced his army into the city, and taken possession of the temple, manifested his respect for the Jews and their religion, for, though he entered into the sanctuary, he did not carry off the sacred vessels, nor the treasure of two

* Macc. viii. xvii. Joseph. Antiq. xii. c. 10. §. 6. vol. 1. p. 551.

† 1 Macc. xiv. 16. 40. Joseph. lib. xiii. c. 5. §. 8. lib. xiii. c. ix. § 2. Ed. Hudson.

‡ Lib. xiv. c. 3. de Bel. Jud. lib. i. c. 6.

thousand talents deposited there. He even gave orders to those who had the charge of the temple, to cleanse it, and bring what offerings the law required to God, and he restored the high priesthood to Hyrcanus, and satisfied himself with reducing the nation to become tributary to the Romans, by securing their strong towns, and confining them within their ancient limits. It was certainly a great proof of the forbearance of the Romans towards the Jews, that the temple of Jerusalem should have remained so long unpillaged, since it was known to contain considerable treasures, and when afterwards it was spoiled by Crassus, there were found therein two thousand talents, collected from various parts*.

Pompey, notwithstanding his moderation, gave great offence, by prophaning with his presence the holy of holies, which none but the high priest was allowed to enter. Prideaux has remarked, that he never afterwards prospered†.

The account given by Josephus, is in great part confirmed by Cicero, in his oration

* Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 4.

† Prid. Con. p. 2.

for Flaccus *. The passage here referred to, is indeed remarkable ; for, from the manner in which Cicero speaks of the forbearance of Pompey, it may be suspected, that the latter entertained more than respect for the religion of the Jews : “ Although a conqueror when
 “ Jerusalem was taken, he touched nothing
 “ belonging to the temple, exercising in this
 “ the same wisdom which he shewed upon
 “ many other occasions, and principally with
 “ a view not to leave in a city, so much ad-
 “ dicted to suspicion and calumny, a subject
 “ for remark ; for I do not believe,” says the Orator, “ that the religion of those, who
 “ were Jews and enemies, was an obstacle to
 “ an excellent general, but his own modera-
 “ tion † ;” a remark rather tending to confirm, than to suppress the idea of some peculiar awe and reverence in the mind of Pompey.

It appears that this great general had a freedman, who was a native of Gadara, named Demetrius, and that Pompey to gratify him rebuilt that city which had been demolished ‡ ; and it is not improbable, that

* Orat. pro Flacco, 28 ; see Chapter on Cicero.

† See Middleton’s Life of Cicero, vol. i. p. 304.

‡ Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 4. §. 4. de Bel. Jud. l. i. c. 7.

a favoured adherent of this description, might have inspired Pompey with sentiments of veneration for the worship of his country.

Julius Cæsar made a league with Antipater, and conferred the priesthood on its lawful claimant Hyrcanus; he discharged the Jews from the burden of winter quarters, and appointed their city to be repaired, exempting them from tribute during the sabbatical year, in which, as it is stated in the decree, they neither “gather fruit from their trees, nor sow the land* ;” and Josephus mentions a brazen pillar, at Alexandria, which recorded the privileges conceded by Julius Cæsar to the Jews†.

Anthony and Dollabella made a league with Hyrcanus, and the latter granted a dispensation to the Jews from military service, on account of their observance of the sabbath‡.

When the Romans had established a dominion over Judea, reducing it into a dependant sovereignty, and afterwards to a province, they allowed the Jews great privileges, en-

* Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 8—10. Cont. Apion, lib. ii. Levit. xxv. 20, 21.

† Ibid. et Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 10. § 11.

‡ Ibid. c. 10.

deavouring to conciliate, by a liberal policy, a people strongly attached to their customs, and permitting them to enjoy the exercise of their religion and laws, especially with respect to marriage and divorce. The power of condemning to death appears to have been taken from them: the Roman governors, however, were required to respect the laws and public councils of the nation.

M. Agrippa visited Jerusalem, where he offered a hecatomb to Jehovah, and splendidly feasted the people, by whom he had been treated with great respect. When he passed through Ionia also with Herod the Great, he redressed the complaints of the Jews*.

Upon a representation made to Augustus by the Jews of Asia, and of the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, complaining that they were deprived by the Greeks of their privileges, and spoiled of the money devoted to the service of the temple, the Emperor issued decrees, directing, that this people should be allowed to enjoy their own laws, and to send up their sacred offerings to Jerusalem; that they should not be compelled to appear be-

* Antiq. lib. xvi. c. 2; see also lib. xii. c. 3.

fore the Judges on the Sabbath day, or on the preceding day of preparation, after the ninth hour; and that whosoever should be convicted of stealing their sacred books or sacred money, should be judged guilty of sacrilege*. This, when considered in conjunction with other decrees of the Roman government in favour of the Jews, sufficiently proves, that the Romans did not, as Mr. Gibbon asserts, despise, what he is pleased to term the superstition of the Jews; though some writers have misrepresented the spirit of their religion, and Tacitus, in the disdainful asperity of his prejudice, describes them to have been the most despised part of the dependants of the Medes and Persians; and other writers speak contemptuously of them for their zeal to make proselytes, and those aversions which they manifested against other people, in a manner contrary to the instructions of Moses†.

Augustus enforced these decrees by instructions to Norbanus Flaccus, Governor of Syria. Agrippa also wrote to the ma-

* Antiq. lib. xvi. c. 6.

† Horat. lib. i. sat. iv. l. 142, 143. sat. ix. l. 70. Tacitus, Juvenal, &c.

gistrates, senate, and people of Ephesus and Cyrene, enjoining that the Jews should be allowed the unmolested right of assembling together, and of transmitting their sacred money to Jerusalem; and the pro-consul Julius Antonius issued similar directions*.

Herod, who had been first created Tetrarch by Anthony, was afterwards solemnly inaugurated at Rome†, with distinguished honours, conferred upon him by Anthony and Octavius. The Jews were allowed a district at Rome on the side of the Tiber, and were indulged in the exercise of their worship, when other systems of religion were discountenanced; for it is not correctly true, as the historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire has represented, that all were deemed equally useful by the magistrate. The Romans had much intercourse with the Jews in Egypt, whither they frequently repaired for corn and commercial purposes.

Philo, who, in the reign of Caligula, was sent from Alexandria, on an embassy to Rome‡, contributed to attract attention to

* Antiq. lib. xvi. c. 6.

† Ibid. lib. xiv. c. 14.

‡ Ibid. lib. xviii. c. 19.

the Jews, being himself a man of considerable learning and authority, and, though not treated with respect by the emperor, he probably was esteemed by his subjects.

The indulgence shown by the Romans to the Jews, in granting and confirming privileges to them, is supposed, by Whiston, to have greatly contributed to procure for them from God, the blessing of Christianity. It is remarkable to observe how Providence rendered the extension of the Roman Empire, and its connection with Judea, subservient to the progress and diffusion of the Gospel.

Tiberius and Vitellius are said to have sent orders for public sacrifices at Jerusalem. Claudius confirmed the privileges of the Jews; it was observed by Seneca, that, after the subjection of Judea, the conquered nations gave laws to their conquerors; and, in this remark, he bears testimony to the completion of the promise which God had uttered to the Israelites, by Moses, “that
“ they should reign over many nations; but
“ other people should not reign over Is-
“ rael*.” Rutilius, on that account, ex-

* Deut. xv. 6. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. vi. c. 11.

presses the wish, that Judea had never been subdued by the arms of Pompey *. It should be observed that the Romans, by the destruction of Jerusalem, made way for the establishment of Christianity, which was not to be implicated with a political institution, but was designed to preserve a spiritual church, capable of administering to the moral and spiritual interests of men under every government.

It appears, from accounts in the Evangelical Writings, that the Romans at first treated the Christians with mildness, and did not always conspire with their persecutors †: they seem to have regarded them as a sect of the Jews. The Roman government was, in general, accustomed to protect its subjects in the possession of their religious rites, excepting when those rites had a mischievous tendency ‡. It was the rapid advancement of Christianity, when it began to excite jealousy and apprehension, when it shook the pillars of the Heathen temple, and the whole structure of superstition seemed likely to fall, which instigated the emperors to become per-

† Rutil. Itiner.

* Acts xxii. 25, 26. xxvii. 2, 3. 42, 43. xviii. 14. 21.

† Cicero in Verrem.

secutors of the Christians. They complained that the Roman altars were deserted, and they threw the odium of crimes upon the Christians, which were sufficiently refuted by the principles which they professed, and the virtues which they displayed.

We have observed, in the remarks on the connection between the Grecian and the Jewish accounts, that the Greeks borrowed some of their laws from those of sacred authority; and from the same source the Romans, by the intervention of the Greeks, might have obtained some knowledge of them.

The Romans, it appears, sent ambassadors to Athens to receive advice in the formation of their judicial code, and by these means they might have obtained Hebrew precepts originally derived through Solon, the Athenian lawgiver.

CHAP. X.

Of the general Belief in the Existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator of the Universe, prevailing among all Nations.

THE simple and sublime principle of natural religion, the existence of a Supreme Being, seems to have been among the first and most universal convictions of the human mind.

The assurance originally derived from that disclosure of himself, which God vouchsafed to make to our first parents, and which was confirmed by the exercise of reason, wherever it was allowed to operate, might have been expected to retain its evidence in every age. The corruption, however, of human nature, and its disposition to yield to impressions from sensible objects and to the illusions of fancy, constantly subjected the mind to the influence of error, and led it to mingle false apprehensions with the persuasions of revealed truth. Hence, though the outline of this great doctrine was to be

discovered in the foundations of religion in every country*, it was often defaced and covered by fictitious additions. Being committed to record by the sacred writers, it preserved its unimpaired lustre among the Jews, when its traces were but faintly to be discerned in the traditions of the heathen world, and its belief was but imperfectly inculcated in the speculations of the most improved philosophers of heathen nations. The intelligence upon this awful subject, which was diffused among the whole people which had been selected to preserve the knowledge of the true God was established on communications imparted from the earliest ages, and renewed from time to time by the uniform language of the prophets, as well as by those manifestations of himself which God had vouchsafed to make ; while among the heathens, the just impressions, which occasionally appeared, had but little influence on the conduct of men.

The conviction of the existence of a Supreme Being, which manifests itself in the worship of Cain and Abel, continued to prevail

* Homer Odyss. lib. xvii. line 485. Justin. de Monarch. Dei. August. de Civit. Dei. lib. iv. c. 31. Vossius de Idolat. Cudworth Intellect. Syst. c. iv. Grotius de Veritat. Plutarch de Iside et Osiride. Euseb. lib. iii. c. 10.

after the Flood, in the simple creed of the Patriarchs. It was preserved with faithful and exclusive veneration of the true God, by those who were in the direct line of the promises ; while Terah, and his descendants in the branch of Nahor, blended the worship of idols with that of the Almighty *. Individuals, from time to time, not in the succession of the chosen seed, manifested a respect for God, as Job and Abimelech ; and some marks of adherence to just opinions, with respect to the divine nature, and to ordinances sanctioned by divine authority, are occasionally to be observed. Joseph married a daughter of a priest of On, and Moses a daughter of a priest of Midian, which priests probably officiated in the service of the true God. In Egypt, long after the time of Moses, a veneration for a Supreme Being prevailed ; since in Thebais in Upper Egypt, Creph, or Cneph, had a temple at Syene, being worshipped as a supreme God, and was represented, as might seem through the malignant influence of Satan, under the figure of a dragon or serpent, with the head of a hawk.

* Gen. xxxi. 30. Joshua xxiv. 2.

In further proof that the Egyptians, amidst the multitude of their deities, revered with peculiar awe one supreme God, it has been observed, that this inscription was to be seen upon the temple of Minerva or Isis, at Sais, "I am all that hath been, is, and shall be, and my veil no mortal hath yet removed *." The ancient Jews were of opinion, that the declaration in Deuteronomy, "the Lord thy God is one Lord," implied that God should be worshipped by the Gentiles, as well as by the Jews †. It is not imagined, however, that the heathen, at any time possessed a full and complete knowledge of the Almighty. It was in "Judah" that "God was known;" "he shewed his word unto Jacob," "his statutes and his judgments unto Israel," and he did not deal so with other nations ‡. The people of the East were gradually led by gross apprehensions, to personate the attributes of God, and to invest his creatures with a divine nature. Herodotus relates, that the worshippers of the sacred animals paid their devotion to the God to whom the

* Plutarch de Isid. et Osirid. tom. ii. lib. xviii. c. 9. p. 453.
Edit. Wytttenbach, Oxon. † Chap. vi. 4.

‡ Psalm lxxvi. 1. cxlvii. 19, 20. Acts xiv. 16. Rom. ix. 4.

beast belonged. The power and godhead of the Almighty, were indeed at all times made manifest among the heathens, by his government, and by his visible works : the censure was, that “ when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things, worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator *.

By a lamentable perverseness, the visible and sensible part of the material world, and the very elements became objects of worship †.

Thus, the heavenly bodies, the sun, and the stars which displayed their radiant glory by night, were first adored as having life and form and intelligence. The sun was worshipped in Egypt, under the name of Hammon, and particularly at Heliopolis as an incorporeal being ‡ ; and as fire became the object of reverence in Persia, so in other countries, every department of nature, every

* Rom. i. 18—25.

† Herod. lib. iv. c. 188. Plato in Cratyl.

‡ Cudworth, c. iv. p. 338.

grove and every stream, was subjected to the fancied dominion of some tutelary deity.

The Providence, which extends over the earth, the sea, and the heaven *, was symbolized under various divinities, multiplied with endless diversity under the different forms of superstition, and often denominated by epithets attributed to the heavenly bodies. The original idea was, at length, nearly lost in the extravagant fancies which were concerted and pourtrayed by those who knew not, or respected not the Divine prohibition, against the making of any graven image or sculptured similitude as an object of worship. Hence, notwithstanding enlightened and philosophical minds might entertain some just apprehensions of the Divine nature, yet St. Paul describes the heathen as being without God in the world; the ordinary service of idolatry was calculated to excite only the most delusive and pernicious opinions and practice in the great bulk of the heathen world, while men bowed down to their own consecrated imaginations in the works of the hands of man, or associated the memory of departed benefactors with their sentiments of

* August. de Civit. Dei, lib. iv. c. 1.

reverence for the Supreme Being*, wandering from the original doctrines revealed concerning a first cause.

The Egyptian and Phœnician theologies, which gradually sunk into the grossest superstition, and the theology of the Babylonians and Chaldæans, which Lucian† represents to have been derived from them, though they seem to have established a worship, repugnant alike to reason and religion, the influence of which spread to the Greeks and Romans, yet could not totally extinguish the remembrance of a Supreme God‡; and hence, amidst the wildest and most extravagant fictions of antiquity, we occasionally meet with just notions with respect to the perfection of God's attributes.

In the mythology of the Greeks, not only are the different deities represented in subjection to Jove, but he himself is described by Homer and Herodotus, by poets and historians, as subservient to, and constrained by an everlasting fate§.

With respect to the nature and attributes

* Cicero Disput. Tuscul. lib. i. Plutarch de Isid. et Osirid.

† Lucian de Synecdoche, et de Deâ Syriâ.

‡ Lactant. p. 11.

§ Cudworth, Intell. Syst. c. iii.

of God, there was such diversity of sentiment as might be expected from those who formed their opinions chiefly from traditional notions, or from a contemplation of the works of nature, and the appointments of life, obtaining occasionally a glimpse of what God had revealed of himself.

The philosophers in general spoke of the Deity in a manner conformable to their several systems. Some entertained apprehensions of the unity of the spiritual nature, and of the omniprescience of the Supreme Being; but they do not appear to have been sufficiently aware of his claims to be regarded as a distinct and independent Being, the Creator and Director of the universe; and as standing in that relation to men, which exercises a providential care, and demands a perpetual reverence and submission. Socrates obtained some apprehension of the personal superintendence of God, but he admitted of the existence of other deities. Plato considered the convictions which he with difficulty formed of the Supreme Being, as not capable of being communicated to the people.

Epicharmus, the most ancient of the comic writers, relates a tradition, that God existed

before all chaos*. Socrates, Xenophon, and Plato, describe the divine attributes with much truth and sublimity†. Socrates, in particular, speaks of the Deity as of a being distinct from the universe over which he presides. Many of the most learned and philosophical men, however, seem to represent the Divinity rather as an animating power, which pervades the world, than as an eternal God by whom the material systems were created and are sustained‡; and these, while they expose the errors of different sects, speak themselves with great diffidence and uncertainty upon the subject.

The story of Simonides§ is well known, who, being asked by Hiero, king of Syracuse, what God was, desired a day to answer the question, and when that period had expired, he requested two days; upon being again called upon for his answer, he doubled the number, and continued so to do, when he was urged upon the subject, the king therefore expressed his surprize and enquired his reason, “ I do

* Grotius de Verit. lib. i. not. et Cudworth.

† Memorab.

‡ See a Treatise on the Records of the Creation, by John Bird Sumner, § 8.

§ Socrat. Apol. § 6. 18. Plat. Phæd. 12. 30. et passim.

“ so,” said the poet, “ because the longer
 “ I meditate upon the subject, the less I
 “ find myself able to answer the question :”
 and in truth nothing but divine revelation has
 afforded any just solution to it.

It was difficult for the most enlarged minds
 to abstract their conceptions from impressions,
 early imbibed, and strengthened by all the
 institutions and religious observances which
 men beheld ; and many of those who affected
 superior knowledge, appear to have mani-
 fested the greatest inconsistency and folly.

The deities, who were worshipped, were
 beings of known and recent origin, who lived
 in corporeal pleasures and sensual indul-
 gence ; they were sometimes represented as
 indifferent to the concerns of men, and some-
 times described as accessible to them, and
 descending on earth for partial interference,
 and the gratification of vicious passions.

Diogenes Laertius speaks of an altar,
 erected in Attica, with design to avert a
 plague, and which was dedicated to the un-
 known God *. It does not appear from the
 account in the Acts of the Apostles, that any
 image was consecrated to the Unknown God,

* In Vita Epimenid. See also Lucian in Philopat.

whom the Athenians ignorantly worshipped *. It has been supposed, that the altar only was inscribed with the dedication which St. Luke has mentioned, and that no representation by image was allowed of that nature, which was confessedly inscrutable. Pausanias speaks also of altars among the Athenians, dedicated to the gods, called Unknown. Whether the attributes, which the poets and philosophers ascribed to the chief deity, whom they sometimes represented as “greatest and best,” were by the Athenians referred to the mysterious and undescribed God, or whether what they worshipped as incomprehensible, was regarded as Pan, or as a merely local or subordinate Deity, we have no means of deciding. Macrobius †, however, states, that the philosophers, when they treated of the supreme God, whom the Greeks called *τ' αγαθόν* and *πρῶτον Αἷτιον*, or sometimes *νῦν*, admitted nothing fabulous. The general notions were loose and vague, and men of understanding, who despised the superstition of the vulgar, though

* Acts xvii. 23. Pausan. l. i. c. 4. p. 4. l. v. c. 14. p. 412. Edit. Lips. See also Maxim. Tyrius. Dissert. 22. Stobæus Excerpt. de Mahum. Also Plato, Phæd. Lucian, Philopat.

† Somn. Scip. lib. i. c. 2.

willing to carry on their views beyond the unsatisfactory objects which they professed to worship, still lost themselves in conjecture, and closed their reasonings in vain speculation.

St. Paul, in stating to them that the God whom he declared unto them, had “made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is the Lord of heaven and earth, and dwelleth not in temples made with hands, and that in him we live and move and have our being,” refers to certain of the Grecian poets as having said that “we are also his offspring*.”

Aratus and Cleanthes, as there will hereafter be occasion to remark, have each been supposed to be alluded to by St. Paul, upon this occasion, and each has left a line expressive of the sentiment which the Apostle cites. Aratus begins his *Phænomena* with this line,

Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεθα.

This is agreeable to the representation of Homer, who describes Jupiter as the father of men and Gods.

It appears that St. Paul, in proclaiming the attributes of God to the Athenians, di-

* Acts xvii. 28. Wolfius in loc. Cudworth, *Intell. Syst.* p. 475.

rected his reasoning to those points which were of immediate and essential importance to them, representing to them, that they ignorantly worshipped the God “ who was not far from any of them, and who was to be sought for if haply they might feel after him and find him ;” thus leading a people, whose forefathers had put Socrates to death upon a bigotted charge of not esteeming those to be Gods whom the city revered*, and of having introduced new deities, to reflect, that, in fact, they were in the darkness of error, who thought that the godhead was “ like unto gold or silver, or stone graven “ by art and man’s device,” and that the times of ignorance and idolatry were no longer to be endured.

The communications which the Apostle imparted, were well calculated also to correct those erroneous notions which the heathens entertained, upon contemplating the present prosperity of the wicked, and the failure of men of worth ; and to suppress the impious murmurs which they often expressed towards the Gods, when defeated in the vain glorious views which led them to aim at

* Platon. Apol. Socrat. tom.i. p. 26. Edit. Serrani.

foreign conquests. The ambitious spirit of the Athenians, and the impatient temper by which they were actuated, had shewed themselves indeed at a much earlier period, when Nicias and Demosthenes had encountered their sad defeat in Sicily, upon which occasion the soldiers loudly accused the Gods, for having exposed to such calamities the former general, who had at all times testified a reverence for them and their service*. By St. Paul the people were taught to moderate such feelings, in the conviction that God had set limits to every earthly power; and they were told with equal consideration and solemnity, that “ God had appointed a day, in which he would judge the world in righteousness, by that man, whom he had ordained, whereof he had given assurance to all men in that he had raised him from the dead †.

It should be noticed, that Macrobius makes a remarkable statement concerning the Epicureans, which may serve to illustrate the account given in the Acts, with respect to the reception which the doctrines preached by St. Paul received from that sect. His words are

* Thucyd. l. vii. § 86. p. 504. Edit. Duker.

† Acts xvii. xxxi.

as follow : *Epicureorum tota factio, æquo semper errore à vero devia, et illa existimans ridenda quæ nesciat, sacrum volumen et augustissima irrisit naturæ seria**.

Cicero well exposes the errors in the reasoning of the different sects of philosophers concerning God ; he affirms that there were many popular deities, but only one natural God: he states under just apprehensions some attributes of the divine nature, but does not sufficiently refute the defective notions which were brought forward ; particularly the opinions entertained by the Stoics of God's Providence, which they conceived to take care of great things, but to neglect the small, being unable to explain the misfortunes in which great men were sometimes involved †.

Lucian, somewhat sarcastically, and in later times, remarks that some, rejecting all other deities, conferred universal dominion on one ‡.

Plutarch relates the Stoics to have believed in one God. *Æacus* is said to have obtained rain when Greece was affected by a long

* *Somn. Scip. lib. i. c. 2. p. 5. Edit. Lug. Bat.* It is not clear what is meant by " the sacred volume."

† *De Natur. Deor. lib. ii. c. 66. et Tuscul. Quæst. lib. iii.*

‡ *Menippus.*

drought, by praying, at the suggestion of the Delphic oracle, to the common God of all nations *.

There are many Heathen writers, who not only mention the unity of God, but who also speak of Him as the Creator of the universe. Jupiter is sometimes spoken of as a God of Covenants, *Ζεὺς ορκίος*, or Jupiter Fœderator, and it is observable, that the fragments of the Sybilline books, preserved by Lactantius, assert the existence of one supreme unbegotten God, the Creator of the heavenly bodies, of the earth and water, who alone was to be worshipped as the Governor of the world, and who had lived from all eternity. As it is uncertain, however, at what period the several parts of these books were written, but little stress can be here laid upon them.

The Heathen gods in the time of Varro exceeded thirty thousand. This writer, who complied with the existing superstitions, expressed the wish that men could be freed from prejudice and custom, that they might wor-

* Clem. Alex. Strom. vi. § 3, p. 753. tom. 2. Edit. Potter.
1 Sam. xii. 18.

ship one God ; and he stated that the ancient Romans worshipped one God, without image, for one hundred and seventy years after the commencement of that empire ; he gave it as his opinion, that, if they had continued to do so, the gods would have received a purer reverence, in confirmation of which he referred to the Jews*.

It is obvious to remark, that the doctrine thus described as general and prevailing in all ages, is nevertheless to be regarded as a memorial of truth, originally revealed from God, and retaining, through every generation, the impression of his word. It still however produced, even on the minds of the philosophers by whom it was maintained, only a slight and precarious effect, and was entirely obscured and corrupted by the prevailing superstition and idolatries which overwhelmed the general classes of society, who “ not knowing God, did “ service to them who were by nature no “ Gods †.”

* Cicero de Legib. n. 26. August. de Civit. Dei. lib. iv. c. 11.

† Galat. iv. 8. 1 Cor i. 21.

The Jews uniformly asserted and acted upon a just and consistent doctrine concerning the Divine Unity, while the heathen world, however its philosophers occasionally asserted the principle, totally lost sight of it in practice.

CHAP. XI.

On the Intimations which appear in the Old Testament and among Jewish and Pagan Writers concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity.

INTIMATIONS with respect to the Trinity appear in the writings of sacred, and of profane antiquity. They are to be found not only in the eastern theologies, but in the religious opinions of the Jews, and in the works of the Greeks, as may be particularly instanced in the productions of the Rabbins, and of Plato and Philo.

These notions, however they may differ from the convictions entertained by Christians upon the subject of the mysterious union of three persons in the godhead, and however they may have been corrupted in popular superstition, seem to have originated in divine communications, imparted from above; with less distinction indeed under the old, than under the new dispensation, precise declarations

on the subject being reserved till the publication of the Gospel, when the distinct offices of the Son and of the Holy Spirit were fully disclosed.

That divine attributes are ascribed in the Old Testament to the second and third persons of the Trinity, is certain; and that the intimations thus imparted were productive of persuasions which manifested themselves among the Jews and Heathens, (whatever other circumstances there might be which gave birth or countenance to similar convictions), may be collected from many considerations. God is represented at the creation, in conjunction with other divine persons consulting in secret counsel*, to have concerted the formation of man.

It is generally admitted also, that the manifestations of the divine nature which were made to the Patriarchs, to Moses, to Joshua, and others, were made in the person of Christ, "the Angel," or "Messenger of " the Covenant †."

* Gen. i. 26. iii. 22. xi. 7. xix. 24. See also Job i. 6. xv. 8. Psal. xxxiii. 6. Jer. xxiii. 18. 1 Kings xxii. 19. Dan. vii. 9, 10. Theophil. ad Autolic, lib. ii. p. 115. Edit. Ox. 1684.

† Mal. iii. 1. Tertul. adv. Marcion, lib. 2. Taylor's Ductor Dubit. book ii. c. 1.

When the angel appeared to Hagar in the wilderness, she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, “Thou God seest me*.” When the Lord appeared to Abraham, in the plains of Mamre, it is said, that three men stood by him, yet the Patriarch addressed them as he would have accosted one being, or directed himself to one as superior, “Nay my Lord pass not away†.”

When Jacob wrestled with the man who appeared to him, he called the name of the place Peniel, for, said he, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved‡;” and when he blessed the sons of Joseph, he expressed the hope that the angel which redeemed him from all evil would bless the lads§.

The angel which appeared to Moses in the bush, said, “I am the God of thy father, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob||.” When Joshua was encamped in Gilgal, and he beheld the captain of the host of the Lord, and worshipped him, Joshua was commanded as Moses had been

* Gen. xvi. 13. † Ibid. xviii. 1. 33. ‡ Ibid. xxxii. 30.

§ Ibid. xlviii. 16. || Exod. iii. 6, and 14. com. with John viii. 58.

before to loose his shoes from off his feet, for the place whereon he trod was holy *.

When Manoah enquired the name of the angel who appeared unto him, the angel answered, “ why askest thou after my name, “ seeing it is secret.†,” using the same Hebrew word which is applied to Christ by Isaiah ‡, when, he stiles him “ Wonderful,” and we are told that Manoah, when he knew that he was an angel of the Lord, said unto his wife, “ we shall surely die because “ we have seen God §.”

It was the object of the Jewish dispensation to preserve men from idolatrous propensities, and from following after strange gods: Moses and the prophets, therefore, insist principally on the unity of God, though when led to refer to the offices of the other persons of the Trinity, they could not but impart some notices of a doctrine which was afterwards distinctly to be revealed. It appears from various passages in the prophetic writings, that a conjunction of persons was implied in the contemplation of the unity of

* Exod. iii. 5. Josh. v. 15.

† פלאי Judg. xiii. 18.

‡ Chap. ix. 6.

§ Judg. xiii. 22. See also Dan. iii. 25.

the Godhead. David represents the Lord thus addressing the Son, "This day have I begotten thee *;" and as saying unto him, "sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool †." Zechariah, referring it should seem to the death of Christ, calls upon the sword in the name of the Lord of Hosts, saying, "Awake O sword against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow ‡, saith the Lord of Hosts, smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn mine hand upon my little ones §;" and this text was directly applied by our Saviour to himself when he was about to be betrayed ||.

With respect to the Holy Ghost, from the creation, when the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters ¶, till the period when he descended upon Christ, he is described as having inspired the Prophets and holy men,

* Psal. ii. 7.

† Ibid. cx. 1. See also Isai. xlv. xlviii. 16. Hag. ii. 4, 5.

‡ עמיתי.

§ Zech. xiii. 7. See also Job xix. 25. Isai. xlviii. 16. lix. 19.

|| Matt. xxvi. 31.

¶ Gen. i. 2. Psal. li. 11.

who delivered the communications of God, and he is spoken of by the Evangelists as a being known to the Jews, and without any intimation that they bring forward any new doctrine.

Many proofs that the Rabbins had a notion of the existence of a Trinity might be produced, and learned writers have abundantly shown, that the ancient Jewish theology concurs with the orthodox Christian faith upon these points*. The Jewish writers discovered a mystery in the word Elohim †, they considered the person spoken of as the Son, to be God ‡, and that he had a twofold nature §. The Targumists and Cabbalists make distinctions between Jehovah, the Word, and the habitation of Jehovah, ascribing to each, personal actions and divine properties ||. They confess also a

* Carpzov. *Introduct. Theolog. Judaic.* c. ii. p. 6.

† Rabbi Bechai in *Seg.* Job iv. Col. i.

‡ Bereschit Rabba, cap. v. lib. 2. Raymondi *Pugio Fidei*, Part II. *Dissertatio i.* cap. 119.

§ Midrasch Tillim on Psal. ii. 7. See also Veelleh Shemoth Rabba sive Glossa super Exod. xv. and Psal. lxxxix. 27, 28. See also *Observat. Joseph. de Voisin in præm. Pugion Fidei.*

|| See Oxlee on the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity.

mystery in the blessing expressed in the book of Numbers*.

Philo regards the Logos† and the Holy Spirit, as having each a divine nature.

Indications of a similar persuasion appeared among the Heathens in very early times. The persuasion originated, probably, in some traditionary knowledge of the particulars which have been mentioned. The Heathen Trinity has sometimes indeed no farther conformity to the revealed doctrine than what may be found in a numerical correspondence of persons, but it often also seems to imply a Trinity in the Godhead, a Trinity of causes, of beings eternal and uncreated, though occasionally described under representations which are confused and contradictory‡. The doctrine of a Trinity, then, was not deemed by the ancients incompatible with the principles of reason, and it has been well observed, that he who would examine an article of faith by a proposition in philosophy, should be well assured that his philosophy is correct.

* Numb. vi. 26, and Hales.

† Πρὸς τὸν δεύτερον Θεὸν ὃς ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνου (Θεὸς πρῶτος) Λόγος. Frag. Vol. ii. p. 625. lib. vii. c. 13. Edit. Mangey.

‡ Cudworth Intell. Sys.

Traces of the doctrine are said to be discovered among the Persians. In the magical oracles of Zoroastres, a Trinity is asserted, and a line is cited by Patritius from Damascius, which expresses, that a triad shines in all the world of which unity governs *. These oracles are, however, probably spurious.

The same notion prevailed among the Samothracians. The Chaldæans and Egyptians reduced the divine attributes to three, which may be considered as expressive of the Almighty Father, of the Holy Spirit, and of Him who was the great prototype of love.

Allusions to the second person of the Trinity are to be found in other writings of great antiquity. Aristobulus, tutor to Ptolemy Philadelphus, about 250 years before Christ, spoke of a second cause, designated as "the wisdom of God," "the Father of lights;" and by other titles; Epicharmus, before this time, had covertly described the divine Word as the author of all useful instruction, and as teaching men what they ought to be †.

* Παντὶ γὰρ ἐν κόσμῳ λάμπει, Τριάς, ἥς Μόνος ἄρχει. See also Plato de Legibus, lib. x. tom. ii. p. 895. Edit. Serran. Taylor's Duct. Dub. B. i. ch. ii. p. 43.

† Clemens Strom. l. v. §. 258. p. 719. See also Epist. ad Dionys. and Whitaker on Arianism.

Chalcidius named the first person of the Triad, the High God; the second, mind or Providence; the third, the Soul of the world; He describes the three as "Ordinans," "Jubans," and "Insinuans*." He, however, probably lived long after the promulgation of Christianity.

Striking representations of wisdom personified, and expressive, as some conceive, of the second person of the Trinity, are displayed in the Apochryphal books. The notion of a Trinity appears under diversified modifications in the writings of Pythagoras†, Parmenides and Plato‡. That the triad of the divine Hypostases which they mention, differed in many respects from the Trinity of persons described in the Gospel, is readily admitted. The representations upon the subject, which were framed by the later Platonists, being composed after the promulgation of the Gospel, were probably modified in adaptation to its doctrines. The

* See Cudworth. See also, on the other hand, Bp. Randolph's Tracts on the Trinity.

† Porphyry de Abstinencia, Sectio 27. Carmina Pythag. Hieron. and Stillingfleet, Orig. Sac. b. iii. c. 7.

‡ Σιωπῶ γὰρ Πλάτωνα· ἄντικρυς εὖτος ἐν τῇ πρὸς Εἰραστον καὶ Κηρίσκον ἐπιστολῇ φαίνεται πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, οὐκ εἰδ' ἑπῶς, ἐκ τῶν Εβραϊκῶν γραφῶν ἐμφαίνων. Clem Alex. Strom. I. v. §. 255. p. 710. Edit. Potter.

notion, corrupted and disfigured under an endless variety of forms, is consecrated in the worship of the Brahmins, and represented in their idols, and appears, it is said, in the sacred writings of the Chinese.

The Indians, in South America also, are said to have worshipped a God, whom they considered to be one in three and three in one, but little importance however can be attached to this account.

CHAP. XII.

On the Notions entertained by the Heathens concerning the Creation of the World, and the Origin of Man from the same common Parents.

THE persuasion that the world was created by the power and intelligence of the Supreme Being, and that this supreme Being formed all things from a rude and undigested chaos, is to be found in various writings of the Heathens, having been preserved amidst the most extravagant fictions of antiquity*. Many of the philosophers, indeed, entertained erroneous notions of the eternity of the world, but a more just persuasion often obtained acceptance, and particularly impressed itself on the intelligent mind of Socrates.

Sophocles† also is represented thus to have

* Diod. Sicul. lib. i. c. 6. Edit. Wesseling.

† Endworth.

expressed his conviction in lines which are no longer to be found in his works, "there is
 " in truth one God who made the broad
 " earth and the waves of the sea and the
 " force of the winds." Plato speaks of God as the parent of the world, the artificer of the soul, the creator of heavenly and earthly things, whom it was difficult to discover on account of his incredible power, and when discovered, impossible to describe to all. On which Minutius Felix is led to observe, either that the Christians were philosophers, or that the philosophers had been Christians*.

Zeno remarks, that Hesiod's chaos was water, which subsiding, left a deposit of mud. From this theory many speculations of a similar nature were framed.

Particulars with respect to the Creation were sometimes blended with accounts relating to the deluge, and a common æra was assigned to both these events. Thales, the Milesian, one of the seven sages, considers water as the principle of all things, conceiving God to be the mind or spirit from which all things proceed, and by which the

* Minut. Felix. Octavius, §. 20.

mighty mass of creation is moved. Pindar, in his first Ode, alludes to this general notion. The origin of man also is attributed to mud or earth, by Hesiod and Homer.

Numenius observes, that the prophet Moses had said, that the spirit of God hovered over the waters; and it appears from a treatise of Tertullian on Baptism, that the resting of the spirit upon the waters at the creation, which is described by a remarkable expression, was regarded as bearing an analogy to a later influence on the consecrated element in baptism *. The Hebrew word used in Genesis †, implies, in one sense, the incubation of a bird upon the egg, and Milton, who delights in allusions to the opinions of antiquity, poetically represents the figure

“ On the watery calm
His brooding wings the spirit of God outspread,
And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth,
Throughout the fluid mass ‡.”

It is not impossible that the image expressed by the word might have suggested the idea

* Dei Spiritum, qui ab initio super vectabatur, super Aquas. Tertul. de Baptism, p. 225. Paris, 1664.

† מרחפת.

‡ B. vii. l. 234—238.

of the mundane egg*, which occurs so frequently, particularly in the Eastern Cosmogonies.

Many of the Heathen descriptions of the creation, not only exhibit a general concurrence with the sacred account, but detail the production of the several parts, in the very order in which they were called forth; man being last formed in the image of the Gods, with a countenance raised to contemplate the heavens, and with a capacious mind to rule over other creatures.

Lucretius argues, with great beauty of illustration, that the world had an origin, from the paucity and recency of the memorials of its history, contending that if there were no beginning we should have received accounts of events before the destruction of Troy †.

Horace also traces the progress of civilization, in consistency with a belief in the creation of the world at no very distant period ‡.

Virgil represents Silenus to have described the world as framed from the elemental seeds carried about the great void, while the soil

* Plutarch Sympos. xi. c. 3. Macrobi. lib. vii. c. 16. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. iii. c. 11. Grot. lib. i.

† Lucretius, lib. v.

‡ Horat. lib. i. sat. 3. Grot. de Verit.

hardened and the ocean was disclosed*. He introduces Anchises also relating to Æneas in the Elysian fields, that in the beginning a divine Spirit sustained the universe, which was of celestial origin, and pervaded every part; employing a language derived from Platonic notions, and common to the poets.

It appears then, that though many of the Heathens were materialists, yet that the writers most eminent among them asserted the creation of the world by an omnipotent Being.

* Virg. Ecl. vi.

CHAP. XIII.

*On the General Belief of the Divine Origin
and Immortality of the Soul among the
Heathens.*

A BELIEF in the divine origin and immortal nature of the soul is to be found among the earliest and most general persuasions of all nations. There is no antiquity so remote, and no people so barbarous, as not to manifest some indications of these persuasions: they are to be regarded, however, rather as speculative opinions, mixed with error, than as pure and efficacious principles. Homer opens in his poem some intimations of a future state, in which his heroes were to exist. Herodotus relates that the Egyptians first believed in the immortality, together with the transmigration of the soul*, and the same persuasions were received by the Brahmins†,

* Lib. ii. §. 123. Diodor. Sicul. lib. i.

† Strabo, lib. xv. Porphyry, lib. iv.

Indians, and Thracians. Cæsar represents the Druids to have anxiously instilled the doctrine of the unperishable nature of the soul, which they also supposed to pass from one body to another, after death*.

The belief in a transmigration, here ascribed to the Egyptians and Druids, is illustrated by Virgil, who represents Æneas to have contemplated in the Elysian fields, souls preparing to enter into other bodies, by drinking of the oblivious streams of Lethe; and in a noble episode which Milton, (and perhaps Shakespeare) has imitated, the succession of the distinguished descendants of the Trojan prince is made to pass in review before him. The conviction, however, was not so general, as not to require a frequent renewal of argument upon the subject, nor so strong as to exclude doubt, even from minds of enlarged capacity and considerable attainments. Individuals often expressed their scepticism or their fears†, and some sects publicly denied the doctrine. The best and ablest men, however, maintained it with the strongest assurance. The reasonings of So-

* Lib. vi. cap. 13. Strabo, lib. iv. Amm. Marcell. lib. xv. cap. 9.

† Sallust Bel. Cat. Orat. C. Cæsaris.

crates, Plato *, and Xenophon †, were urged with the greatest impression among the Grecians, and Cicero ‡ deemed himself justified in considering it as a doctrine admitted by the consent of all nations.

Juvenal speaks of man as capable of divine things, and as having derived an understanding from heaven such as brutes do not possess §.

Pliny commends Hipparchus for having proved the relation of man with the stars, and maintained that the soul was a part of heaven ||. Lucian also supposes the soul to have emanated from divine wisdom.

The learned among the primitive Christians insisted with great effect on these and other passages, which contained intimations of the divine nature and immortality of the soul, received as axioms, or κοινὰ ἐννοιαί, observing that the main particulars and foundations of Christianity were thus granted by the philosophers as universal truths. It must, however, always be remembered, that

* Phædo, et passim Mela, lib. ii. Grot, de Verit. lib. i. cap. 22.

† Memorabilia et Cyropædia.

‡ Tuscul. Quæst. lib. i. cap. 16.

§ Sat. xv. l. 143—156.

|| Nat. Hist. lib. ii. cap. 24.

these persuasions were received only as reasonable and probable conjectures, and did not generally operate to practical and moral effects. They were supported by poets and philosophers, but they wanted the confirmation of divine authority. It is to revelation alone, that we are indebted for that assurance which has left no excuse for doubt. The persuasions were affirmed with increased confidence among the Heathens, after the promulgation of the Gospel.

CHAP. XIV.

On the Sentiments entertained with respect to the Origin of Evil, the Existence of Spiritual Beings, their Revolt from Obedience, the Fall and gradual Corruption of Men.

THE opinions which were entertained by the ancients concerning the origin of moral evil were various*.

The operation of some injurious principle vitiating the nature of man, and perverting his moral views, could not be disputed ; and the influence of a malignant power seemed to have introduced disorder even in the first appointments of Providence, and to have counteracted the beneficial tendency of God's ordinances.

Popular convictions every where prevailed of the existence of some beings of the higher

* Plutarch de Isid. et Osirid.

order, who had revolted from their subjection to the heavenly Power which presided over the universe; and upon them were raised many fabulous stories.

It is probable that these convictions were originally founded on the circumstances referred to in Scripture with respect to Satan and his angels, as powerful but malevolent beings, who having first seduced Adam from his obedience, incessantly laboured to deceive, corrupt, and destroy his descendants *. The notion of the Magi of Plutarch, and of the Manicheans, concerning two independent principles, acting in opposition to each other, was also founded on the real circumstances of the apostacy of angels, and of their interference and influence in the affairs of men.

The fictions of Indian mythology with regard to contending powers, and their subordinate ministers, benevolent and malignant, were erected on the same basis of truth; and the Grecian and Roman accounts of the battles of the Giants against Jupiter, were perhaps relations built on the corruptions of tradition on this point.

* 2 Chron. xviii. 20. Job i. 6. Zech. iii. i.

In contemplating the wild fancies, which are spread over the surface of the ancient world, we behold many grotesque representations, which, like the constellations on the celestial globe, exhibit images which serve only to direct us to the stars for which we seek. The continued malignity of those spiritual beings, who had fallen from "their high estate," and who were still possessed of powers far above those which men enjoy in their limited sphere of action, instigated them to support the delusions and superstitions of antiquity, by assisting the arts of those who misled mankind through their deceptions, by prompting divination, possessing the persons, and aggravating the afflictions and despondence of men.

It is scarcely possible to read the accounts of the wonders performed by the magicians, who opposed Moses with their enchantments*, or the responses of the Pagan oracles, (which however ambiguous in general, seem sometimes to have displayed more than mortal discernment,) and not to be convinced that the Almighty allowed these invisible

* Exod. vii. 11. 22. viii. 18, 19. See also Rev. xvi. 5—14.

beings to shew great signs and wonders *, and to deceive and lead captive those who in their infatuated wickedness served them.

The original temptation, by which they drew our first parents from their duty, and led them to transgress the only prohibition which God had imposed, is described in the first pages of Scripture ; and it is repeated, under much disguise, in many fables of classical mythology.

Origen considers the allegorical relations furnished by Plato †, with respect to Porus tempted by Penia to sin when intoxicated in the garden of Jove, as a disfigured history of the fall of man in paradise. It seems to have been blended with the story of Lot and his daughters. Plato might have acquired in Egypt the knowledge of the original circumstances of the fall, and have produced them, under the veil of allegory, that he might not offend the Greeks by a direct extract from the Jewish Scriptures ‡. The heathen notions with respect to the Elysian fields, the garden of Adonis, and that of Hesperides, in which the fruit was watched

* Matt. xxiv. 24.

† Συμπόσιοι, ἡ περὶ ἔρωτος.

‡ Cent. Cels. lib. iv. p. 532. Edit. Benedict.

by a serpent, was probably borrowed from the sacred accounts, or from traditional reports with respect to paradise.

The particular circumstances also of the leader of the evil spirits having envied man's happiness, and by disguising himself under the form of a serpent, occasioned his ejection from paradise *, was figured out in other accounts.

The worship established towards the evil spirit by his contrivance, sometimes under the very appearance in which he seduced our first parents, is to be found among the Phœnicians and Egyptians.

The general notion of the serpent as a mysterious symbol annexed to the Heathen deities, and particularly assigned to Æsculapius, the god of healing, might have been suggested by perverted representations of the agency of the fallen spirit, who assumed the form of a serpent; or perhaps by some traditional reports of the miraculous effects produced by looking on the brazen serpent, which Moses erected by divine command in the wilderness; and the invocation of Eve in the Bacchanalian orgies, (with the pro-

* Casaubon's Origin of Temporal Evils. Plut. de Isid. et Osirid. p. 261.

duction of a serpent, consecrated as an emblem, to public view,) seems to bear some relation to the history of the first temptation*, which introduced sin and death into the world.

The tutelar deity of particular districts was sometimes introduced in the same manner; thus a serpent is represented by Virgil to have appeared to Æneas†; and the connection between serpents and sacred places frequently occur.

The account of Discord being cast out from heaven, referred to by Agamemnon, in the 19th book of Homer's Iliad, has been thought to be a corrupt tradition of the fall of the evil angels.

The first worship of Apollo was offered to him under the representation of a serpent; but Apollo was generally regarded as the deity who had killed the serpent, Python‡, which word was probably derived from the Hebrew word פתן, which signifies a serpent.

* Clem. Alex. Cohort. ad Gentes, Op. vol. i. p. 11. Edit. Potter. Numb. xxi. 8, 9. Justin Martyr's Apol. i. p. 45. Edit. Thirlb. p. 11. Plutarch in Agæ et Cleomen. p. 524. Epphan. Hæres. 80.

† Clem. Alex. lib. v. l. 84.

‡ See Gen. iii. 15.

Claudian shews an acquaintance with the circumstances of the seduction of man, and of an ejection from paradise *, and his description seems to have furnished subject of imitation to Milton.

It has been imagined that the Indians entertained some notions, founded on traditional accounts, of Paradise: and the representations of the serpent under the female form, and styled the Mexican Eve, are said to be found in the symbolical paintings of Mexico †.

The original perfection of man, the corruption of human nature resulting from the Fall, and the increasing depravity which proceeded with augmented violence from generation to generation, are to be found in various parts of prophane literature.

Euryalus, the Pythagorean, declared that man was made in the image of God ‡.

Cicero (as well as Ovid) speaks of man as created erect, as if God excited him to look up to his former relation and ancient abode.

The loss of that resemblance was supposed to have resulted from the effects of disobe-

* Præf. ad Ruffin.

† Humboldt's American Researches.

‡ Comp. with Wisd. ii. 23. See also Gen. i. 27.

dience, and was considered as so universal that it was generally admitted, as is expressed by Horace, that no man was born without vices*.

The conviction of a gradual deterioration from age to age—of a change from a golden period, by successive transitions, to an iron depravity—of a lapse from a state devoid of guilt and fear, to times filled with iniquity, was universally entertained.

Descriptions to this effect are to be found in the writings of almost all the poets†, and they are confirmed by the reports of philosophers and historians. Providence seems to have drawn evidence of the guilt of men from their own confessions, and to have preserved their Testimonies for the conviction of subsequent times.

Catullus represents the unhallowed period when justice was put to flight, and brothers imbrued their hands in fraternal blood, while incest and sacrilege alienated the mind of God from man‡; and Tacitus marks out

* Lib. i. sat. iii. l. 68.

† See Hesiod, Orpheus, Lucretius, Ovid, Juvenal, Catullus, and others.

‡ De Epithal. Pel. et Thetid. line 395—405. Taylor Ductor Dubitan. Book ii. c. i. p. 173.

the progress of depravity, from a period free from offence and punishment, to a flagitious and abandoned wickedness, devoid even of fear*.

The material world was supposed to have a tendency to corruption, a supposition justified by experience, if not founded on some knowledge of the Divine curse to which it had been exposed†.

From a general view of these statements, with respect to the Heathen manners, there is but too abundant proof to demonstrate the corruption of human nature, and the insufficiency of human reason to devise a remedy. The law of nature, which was a transcript of divine wisdom, written on the tables of the heart was broken, and its characters defaced‡; and the principles of truth, which had been originally revealed by God, however preserved in the writings of eminent men, were so mixed with error and falsehood, that they produced but little effect. Plato confessed the necessity of waiting for a divine instructor, who might direct men how to

* Annal. lib. iii.

† Diog. Laert..

‡ See Ductor Dubitan. Book ii. c. 1. p. 177.

conduct themselves towards God, and their fellow-creatures *.

The prophane, are scarcely less forcible than the sacred descriptions, tending equally to shew that the human heart was prone to all evil.

The history of mankind is too often a detail of crimes ; but the most striking circumstance in the character of the Heathen ages, and in the influence of their superstitions, is, that the principles of actions, approved by the philosopher, and consecrated by the the priest, were false and mischievous ; that selfish passions were recommended as glorious, and vices regarded as virtues ; that religion itself was the source of evil ; temples were the scenes of licentiousness †, and deities the examples of vice.

If we confine ourselves to what is indisputably true, we find that the whole period from the flood till the appearance of Christ, exhibited strong proofs of the depravity of the human heart, and of the weakness of human reason, notwithstanding the light which was occasionally diffused by communications from above ; and every thing, there-

* Alcibiad.

† Herodotus, Clio, &c.

fore, illustrated the indispensable necessity of some fuller instruction, of some more perfect and efficacious principles to influence and direct mankind.

Corruption of manners among the Jews appears to have reached its highest pitch when the birth of Christ was announced.

The strictures of our Lord emphatically expose the pharasaic pride which prevailed among those, who, like whited sepulchres, were full of impurity.

The courts of Herod, and of his successors, were the scenes of every pollution, and the people seemed abandoned and lost in wickedness. The condemnation of Christ, his crucifixion, and the rejection of his kingdom, were alone wanting to complete the consummation of their guilt.

Josephus, speaking of the sacrilegious conduct of some wretches during the siege of Jerusalem, declares, that if the Romans had delayed to come against these wicked men, the city must have been swallowed up by an earthquake, overwhelmed by a deluge, or consumed by fire from heaven like Sodom; for that the generation was much more impious than those which had suffered such

judgments * ; and that for their madness the whole people was destroyed.

Among heathen nations most advanced in civilization and refinement, “all iniquity was committed with greediness,” and the confessions of those who suffered from the effects of depravity, attest the fidelity and the beneficial views of the disciples of Christ, who laboured to introduce principles which might counteract it.

It has been observed, that it was probably one object of Providence, in the preservation of sufficient documents, to illustrate the universal failure in the human character, under all the circumstances of public and domestic life—of national and private manners ; to draw even from the mouths of the Heathens a testimony to the sad effects of the Fall, and a confession of the necessity of a divine interference to renovate a decayed nature. It was an object also, which had been fully attained, to certify by actual experiment, the incompetency of reason, to recover by its own powers its original rectitude and strength, the vanity of the systems which had been

* De Bello Jud. lib. v. c. 13. § 6. p. 1256. Edit. Hud.

successively framed, and the utter inability of man to judge or to act rightly by his own unassisted intellect. The corruption of Pagan manners continued long after the promulgation of Christianity, to exhibit a striking contrast to the purity of those who were converted to that religion, and to draw out by the persecution which it inflicted, impressive proofs of the virtues of those who professed it. The influence of the Gospel gradually dispersed the shades, and produced a beneficial effect, a general diffusion of light over the earth.

CHAP. XV.

*Of the Knowledge, which prevailed among
Heathen Nations, of the general Deluge.*

THE destruction of mankind, which was effected by the deluge, was so signal and so extensive a judgment, that the remembrance of it was every where retained, and traditions of it every where preserved. Express mention of this memorable infliction of divine wrath, is to be found in the earliest writings, and the accounts of its general or partial operation appear in various relations.

Berosus and Abydenus we have seen, speaking of it in histories of the Assyrians and Medes*, and records of the event extended through the East, and thence were

* Euseb. Præp. Evan. l. ix. c. 12. Joseph. Antiq. lib. i. c. 3.

circulated through every country, exciting a peculiar interest in those lands, in which some memorials and vestiges of it were to be found.

Travellers in Armenia were shewn on the summit of Mount Ararat, near the source of the Euphrates, the spot where the ark of Noah was supposed to have rested after the subsiding waters of the deluge ceased to buoy it up; and even the remnant of the structure was said to be extant in the time of Theophylact, of Antioch*, and Chrysostom†. The Egyptians had a sacred ship, called Baris, which represented the ark; and the story of the Argos is supposed, somewhat fancifully, by Bryant, to have been derived from Egypt, and to have relation to the ark, represented by the sacred ship of Osiris. An allusion to the ark is to be found also in many sacred rites of antiquity.

* Theoph. lib. xxxiii. Jud. lib. xiv. c. 8.

† Vol. vi. c. 74. Edit. Savil. Sir W. Raleigh, after Ben Gorion, supposes Ararat to be Mount Caucasus. Wells determines, that the ark rested on the Gordyan mountains. See Geograph. of the Old Test. vol. i. p. 65. Universal Hist. and Parsons' Remains of Japhet, p. 16.

Nonnus, who was born at Panopolis in Egypt, in the fifth century, and who collected in his *Dionysiaca* scattered remnants of knowledge, from the hieroglyphical descriptions and ancient hymns of the country, alludes to the circumstances of the deluge*.

Relations respecting this event were to be found in various parts of Greece. Aristotle speaks of the effects of the deluge of Deucalion in Epirus†. The Thessalians seem to have believed it to have prevailed in their country‡.

The people of Phocis supposed the ark to have rested on Parnassus§. Lucian, a native of Samosata, gives also an account of the flood||.

Cumberland imagines the Scythian Deucalion of Lucian to have been the Ouranus of Sanchoniatho, distinguishing him from the Grecian Deucalion: and a statue of him is said to have been in the Adytum of Hierapolis, with a golden dove upon his head.

* Bryant's Mythol. vol. ii. p. 369.

† Meteorol. lib. i. c. 14. p. 778.

‡ Servius in Virg. Eclog. vi. l. 41.

§ Pausan. x. p. 811.

|| De Dea Syria, vol. ii. p. 882. See chapter on Lucian

Semiramis is related to have protected pigeons, with some reference, it has been supposed to Noah's dove. The Syrians considered fish and doves as more especially the gift of the Deity*, and allowed the latter to fly unmolested through their cities as sacred birds.

They were revered as the emblems of peace in consequence, probably, of the tid-ing of abated wrath which they brought back to Noah in the ark; and for similar reasons the olive branch might be regarded as the symbol of forgiveness. Lucretius alludes to the character of Venus, as Dione who calms the sea.

“ O lovely queen of heaven, at thy command
The whirlwinds die away, the storm is still,
And the big clouds dissolve in limpid air;
To thee we owe the beauties of the field,
And earth's rich produce—At thy mild approach
The dimpling waves put on a thousand smiles,
The sky no longer lours, but calm and clear,
Spreads its pure azure to the world's extreme,”

The dove was the emblematic bird of Venus, and festivals were established to commemorate the departure and return of that

* Hygyn. Fab. 197. Lucian de Dea Syria, p. 912.

goddess to the sea *, and Venus was regarded as sprung from the sea. Bryant, who pushes these remarks very far, observes, that the ancient and true name of the dove was Jonah, or Jonas †, importing a sacred emblem so received by the line of Ham, and admitted as a symbol among the Hebrews, and it had a peculiar propriety as borne by the prophet, when he proclaimed the necessity of repentance to Nineveh.

Some writers considered the sea as the avenger of perfidy ‡. It deserves also to be remarked, that Iris, the goddess of the rainbow, is represented as the messenger from the gods to men ; she was one of the Oceanides, being the daughter of Thaumas and Electra, and she is described as having supplied the clouds with water for the deluge.

Not only did a general belief prevail that a deluge had taken place, but the history of the world among the Heathens seems to take its origin from that period, insomuch that many blended the idea of

* Seneca, Hyppol. and Musæus, l. 249.

† Bryant's Mythol. vol. i. p. 293.

‡ Ovid. Ep. Med. ad Jason.

a creation with that of the universal flood, and supposed the system of the world to arise from a chaos of elements, of which water was the primordial principle.

CHAP. XVI.

On Testimonies of Prophane Writers, which directly bear Witness to Facts recorded in the Scripture of the Old Testament.

THERE are numberless passages in the prophane writings of antiquity, which bear a direct testimony to the truth of many facts recorded by the sacred Historians. A few only of these need be produced. Many representations, which bear evidence to the creation, the flood, and other particulars which took place in the early ages of the world, have already been brought forward; and many others will be produced in the remarks upon the works of individual writers. Manetho, Berosus, Hestiaëus, Hecatæus, and others relate, that those who succeeded the first man lived to a thousand years, and confirm many other particulars too numerous to mention with respect to the early ages of the world.

Nicolaus of Damascus mentions Abraham as a stranger who had rule in Damascus, to which city he came from Chaldea, and that upon a tumult he went to Canaan, where he had a numerous offspring *.

Tacitus admits that distinguished cities had been burnt by fire from Heaven on the plains where Sodom and Gomorrah stood †.

Josephus refers to writers who speak of the race of giants ‡ in Assyria and Canaan, and Eusebius presents us with passages which repeat accounts concerning them, particularly from Abydenus § and Eupolemus ||.

The passage through the Red Sea was remembered among the people of the Syrian Hierapolis, and is related by Artapanus ¶.

Numberless writers speak of Moses as a distinguished legislator; some advert to the sublimity of his writings **, and others describe the excellence and permanent influence of his laws.

* Euseb. præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 16.

† Hist. lib. v. §. 7.

‡ Lib. v. c. 2. lib. vii. c. 12.

§ Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 14. Grot. de Verit. lib. i. note xl. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vii. c. 16.

|| Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 17.

¶ Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 27.

** Longinus.

Tacitus mentions the Exodus from Egypt, and the abode of the Israelites in the wilderness, but he mingles many absurd reports with his account *.

Menander, relating the acts of Ithobal, king of the Tyrians, mentions the drought which happened in the time of Elias †.

Josephus, in describing the events of sacred history, repeats, in a continued relation, almost all the leading circumstances which are recorded by Moses, and by the inspired Penmen, confirming his account from time to time, by a reference to other writers; most of the great events of the Jewish history are thus supported, and with regard to particulars recorded in the New Testament the witnesses are still more numerous.

* Hist. lib. v. §. 3.

† Joseph. Antiq. lib. viii. c. 13. p. 378.

CHAP. XVII.

On Deities and fictitious Heroes in Heathen Fable, who seem to represent real Characters and Persons mentioned in Sacred History.

IN the biography of the East, we discover every where the lineaments of men, who are mentioned in Scripture as the inventors of useful arts; and the Pagan mythology shadows out the personages of Sacred Writ, pourtrayed with such consistency as might be expected, where both drew from originals without copying from each other, and where changes were frequently produced, in representations which rested for many ages only on tradition.

When heroes and benefactors conferred obligations on society, they naturally became objects of veneration, and their fame extended with the dispersion of mankind.

Noah is celebrated in the history of many countries, sometimes under the name of Janus, Saturn, and Prometheus*.

* Bryant's Mythology, vol. ii.

The names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were well known among Heathen nations*. The Egyptians were accustomed to invoke the God of Abraham. Japhet is supposed to have been celebrated as Neptune. Ammon† was esteemed the son of Ham.

These, having been once consecrated, continued to be regarded as divine, not only in the countries, in which their apotheosis took place, but wherever colonies emigrated, or superstition spread; hence it is, that we find the same deities worshipped in different countries, under the same symbols with different names.

Plato‡, adopting a notion alluded to by Hesiod, supposes the race of heroes to be derived from the intermixture of Gods with women; others imagined that the giants were a race expelled from heaven; accounts which appear to be grounded on the relation in Genesis vi. 2. Some writers speak of the giants as sons of the earth§.

* Origen cont. Cels. lib. i. c. 22. p. 339. Edit. Benedict. Grotius ad Matt. xii. 23.

† Grotius de Veritat. lib. i. c. 16. 62.

‡ Selden. de Diis Syris. Syntag. ii. cap. 8. p. 247. Gale's Court of the Gentiles, vol. i. cap. 11. p. 72.

§ Pausanius Attic. c. xxxv. p. 87. Edit. Lips. p. 169. comp. with Gen. v. 4.

Cicero, in speaking of the different opinions which prevailed among the philosophers, with respect to the origin of the gods, observes, that Chrysippus represented some to have been men who had obtained immortality; he remarks upon the absurdity of those representations, which had resulted in great measure from the deification of mortals, and which had been described with such extravagant and incongruous fictions by the Poets. *Qui et irâ inflammatos, et libidine furentes induxerunt deos: feceruntque, ut eorum bella, pugnas, prælia, vulnera videremus; odia præterea, dissidia, discordias, ortus, interitus, querelas, lamentationes, effusas in omni intemperantia libidines, adulteria, vincula, cum humano genere concubitus, mortalesque ex immortali procreatos. Cum poëtarum autem errore conjungere licet portenta Magorum, Egyptiorumque in eodem genere dementiam: tum etiam vulgi opiniones, quæ in maxima inconstantia, veritatis ignorance, versantur*.*

It would be useless to prosecute this subject, as it has been so fully investigated by Bryant and other writers.

* Cicero de Natura Deorum, lib. i. sect. 16.

CHAP. XVIII.

On Events related by Tradition and prophane Historians, which are evidently mutilated Accounts of Events recorded in the Scriptures.

THE earliest records of Pagan history, and the most remote accounts obtained by tradition, though they often alledge an extravagant antiquity, do not when carried up to the regions of fable extend beyond the deluge, though they sometimes exhibit a corrupt statement of circumstances which occurred previously to that event, and which are transferred by them to later times.

Among the most remarkable events which took place after the flood, were the attempt to build Babel, the consequent confusion of tongues, and the dispersion of the inhabitants of the earth from the plains of Shinar.

Frequent allusions to each of these circumstances, and disfigured reports of them are to be found in various works.

The tales concerning Ochus and Ephialtes, who affected to dethrone the gods, with many others of a similar description, related or referred to by all writers from Homer to Ovid, may be regarded as mutilated accounts conveyed down by tradition, with respect to the fall of the angels, and the giants who lived in the earlier ages of the world *. Bryant supposes the structure raised by the giants to have been a typhon or altar of stone.

The fiction in Homer of Xanthus (the horse of Achilles) having spoken and professed to have seen Apollo, is possibly taken from the circumstance mentioned of the ass of Balaam.

Vossius supposes Moses to have been the Bacchus of the Greeks, and many of the actions of Joshua and of Samson were ascribed to the Syrian Hercules †, who is the original of the Grecian Hercules.

The memory of events, which occurred in ancient times, was frequently preserved in monuments erected on the very spots on which they happened, and these memorials

* Hom. Odyss. lib. i. l. 306. Virg. Æneid. lib. vi. l. 582. Origen Cont. Cels. Crenii Fascicul. Dissert. vol i. c. 2.

† Vossius de Idolat. lib. i. b. 1. c. 26 and 88. p. 169.

gave celebrity to the events, among those who emigrated from, or visited the countries in which they were preserved.

The erection of the stone, on which Jacob had rested, pouring oil upon it, and calling the place Bethel *, was kept in remembrance under the consecrated stones which the Phœnicians, from Bethel, called *Βαιτύλια*, and from this event probably was derived the Heathen custom of anointing stones, which were consecrated and worshipped in the superstition of antiquity, and upon which custom the proverb was founded, “worship every shining stone †.” The erection of stones as memorials of victories was very common ‡.

The memory of Joseph is supposed to have been preserved, in Egypt, under various circumstances, and particularly the Apis is thought to represent the kine which appeared to him in his dream.

Pausanias relates that at the Battle of Marathon, the Athenians received assistance from a man who appeared in a rustic form

* Gen. xxxv. 14, 15. Euseb. præp. lib. i. c. 10.

† Scaliger not. It. Gr. Bochart Can. lib. ii. c. 2. Selden de Diis Syris. *πάντα λίθον λιπαρον προσκυνει*. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vii.

‡ Pausan. Attic. c. xxxii. p. 80.

and attire, who after having slain many of the Barbarians with a ploughshare, disappeared *, which relation may be thought to bear some resemblance to the account of Shamgar in the book of Judges †.

There are so many correspondent circumstances between the events of sacred and those of prophane history, that details of comparison have been pushed to a very fanciful and extravagant extent. He, says, Warburton, who does not discover that the story of Baucis and Philemon is taken from that of Lot, must be very blind ‡; though he that can discover the expedition of the Israelites, from Egypt to Palestine, in the fable of the Argonauts, is certainly blessed with second sight.

The story of Sylla's having cut off the purple lock of Nisus, king of Megara, and given it to Minos, and by that means destroyed him and his kingdom; that also recorded with relation to Cephissus §; and likewise that of Hercules and Omphale were probably taken from the history of Samson.

* Attic. c. xxxii. p. 79.

† Ch. iii. v. 21. Maundrel's Travels, p. 149.

‡ See Bochart, Hiero. p. 1. lib. ii. c. 14. M. Banier les Metamorphoses d'Ovid Explicat. de la Fable de Lot.

§ Pausan. Attic. xxxvii. p. 90.

The fable of Aristæus receiving the bees from a putrid ox, seems to have been derived from the account of Samson's finding honey in the lion.

Some consider the story of Niobe's children as borrowed from accounts with respect to the destruction of the children of Job ; and the fable of Phaeton to have been grounded on the miracle of the standing still of the sun, spoken of in the book of Joshua.

The Stoics and Epicureans believed that the world should be finally destroyed by fire, and some countenance to this persuasion is to be derived from passages in sacred writ,

CHAP. XIX.

On Customs borrowed from the Jews.

MANY Heathen legislators affected to have been enlightened by Divine Revelations, as Zoroastres and Zamocles.

Lycurgus, who established his institutions about 840 years before Christ, laid claim to inspiration; and Numa Pompilius, endeavouring to give a mysterious solemnity to his regulations, pretended to hold converse with the goddess Egeria.

The practices of consulting oracles, of conjecturing by dreams, and other modes of procuring divine knowledge, together with a respect for the distinctions of the priesthood kept up in almost all countries, were probably founded on imitation of Hebrew observances.

Rays of truth penetrated through the thickest shades of Heathen darkness, and tintured the opinions of all nations upon

these subjects. They prevailed, not only among the earlier people of the East, but among the Greeks and Romans*, and in some instances among the Celts and Indians†, the Gauls of Britain‡, and even among the different tribes of America§, as may be collected from various circumstances.

The Heathen writers also borrowed images from the accounts communicated in Scripture, and attributed to their deities distinctions similar to those which are ascribed to the Divine Majesty, when God manifested himself to the world.

The Heathen deities are represented || to be veiled in clouds as Jehovah appeared ¶.

* Oracul. Orph. Vers. in prolegom. Scalig. Emend. Temp.

† Those nations digested their accounts by weeks; vide Philo, lib. iii. c. 13. Dion. Cass. lib. xiii. et Hieron. lib. ii.

‡ The same may be observed of the Sclavonians; see Hermolet. lib. xi. c. 84.

§ Joseph. Acosta. Hist. lib. v. c. 27. lib. vi. sat. 2. and Antonio Herrera de Orig. Amer. pref. lib. 104. c. 15. Leon. Hist. Nat.

|| Hom. Il. Lib. V. v. 185. Horat. lib. i. Ode 2. v. 31. Joseph. Antiq. lib. v. Ovid. Metam. lib. ix. v. 271. Livius l. 1. 16. Wolf. in Act. i. v. 9.

¶ Exod. xiii. 21. xl. 34. 1 Kings viii. 10.

Many of their religious institutions were evidently derived from the Mosaic appointments, as that of marriage and the observance of stated days, particularly of the Sabbath* among the Greeks and Romans, and indeed among almost all nations.

The rite of circumcision, which was appointed by God as a sign of distinctive covenant with Abraham, and designed to be expressive of spiritual purity †, was adopted by other people. The Egyptians and Ethiopians are supposed by some writers to have derived the rite from Cronus, who is said to have been circumcised ; and not from Abraham, who was not circumcised till after he had left Egypt. The custom prevailed also among the Odomanti, a people of Thrace. The Scholiast upon Aristophanes informs us, that they were reputed to be Jews.

There are other particulars in which the Heathens seem to have borrowed customs from the Jews. Solon, agreeably to the Jewish practice, decreed, that the time of

* Vide Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. ii. Philo de Die Sal. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. v. Selden de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. iii. c. 5. Euseb. lib. xii. c. 12. Theophil ad Autolic, lib. ii. Lucian Paleolog.

† Gen. xvii. 12. Rom. ii. 28, 29. Philip. iii. 3.

the sun setting on the mountains should be the last hour. His law was copied by the Decemviri.

It should be observed, also, that the Arabians and the Numidians, in Lybia, computed time by nights or by lunar revolutions, as did also the ancient Germans*. Cæsar relates the same story of the Gauls †, and Ptolemy of the Druids ‡. The inhabitants of Bohemia and Poland still keep up the custom, and the English retain the use of the terms se'nnight and fortnight.

The laws of the twelve tables with respect to the inheritance and adoption of children, retribution in punishment of corporeal injuries, and other points, seem to have been framed upon principles sanctioned by Moses ; and traces of resemblance between the Hebrew and Roman codes are still to be discovered in the institutes of Justinian §.

The devotion of human victims on a re-

* Nicol. Damasc. Tacitus de Moribus German. Spicceleg. Saxon. lib. i. art. iii. 67.

† De Bell. Gall. lib. vi. § 18. Aulus Gellius, lib. iii. cap. 2.

‡ Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. xvi. c. 95. Edit. Hard.

§ Comp. Numb. xxvii. 8. with Just. Inst. lib. iii. tit. 1, 2. Exod. xxi. 24, 25. comp. with Instit. lib. iv. tit. 4. See also Exod. xxi. 35, 36. et Aulus Gellius, Noct. Attic. l. xx. c. 1.

ligious principle, and the reverential regard to oaths, (even to the extent of considering them binding to the perpetration of actions against the dictates of nature, and the wishes of those who respected them) are illustrated by Heathen relations, tending to confirm the credibility of events recorded in Scripture, which are not consistent with the established opinions and ordinary conduct of men. Thus, with respect to the former practice, we might refer to the accounts concerning Diomed, Codrus, Curtius, and the Decii; and with regard to the second, the surrender of Daniel by Darius to the malice of his enemies, and the beheading of John the Baptist, by Herod, in conformity with his inconsiderate promise, may be compared with what is recorded by Herodotus in the history of Xerxes and Amestris*.

The appropriation of a tithe of the produce of the land, of spoils, and of other things, to religious purposes, is mentioned by many Heathen writers†. Lycurgus dis-

* Lib. ix. c. 108—112.

† Herod. lib. vii. c. 114. Dion. Hal. Pindar. Olymp. Ode ii. Eurip. Rhes. Act iii. Pausan. in Phocis. Doughtæi Analect. Sacr. Excurs. Amst. 1684.

tributed the possession of the lands by lot, and rendered them inalienable.

The feasts, in which servants were put upon a footing with their masters, were apparently borrowed from the Jews*, and from the feast of tabernacles†. The Eleusynian mysteries also are thought to have had a similar origin‡.

We know the reverence which the Jews paid to the state of the moon§. The prophets reprove them for their scrupulous fancies upon this subject||. The Lacedæmonians, who were supposed to have had an early connection with the Jewish nation¶, were influenced by similar impressions, as appeared upon a memorable occasion, since they were prevented from sending the assistance which they voted for the Athenians, (when the Persians were advancing with vast armies against them) on account

* Hospin. de Origin. Fest. Jud. Statius Antiq. Conviv. p. 63.

† Brand's Popular Antiq. c. 31. Macrob. Saturnal. c. 16.

‡ Macrob. l. i. c. 16.

§ 1 Sam. xx. 5. 2 Kings iv. 23. Prov. vii. 20. Isai. lxvi. 23.

|| Isaiah i. 14.

¶ 1 Mac. xii. 21.

of a superstition, which restrained them from marching till after the new moon: this delay deprived them of any share in the honor of the battle of Marathon, as they did not arrive till the day after it had taken place *.

* Isocrates Panegyry. p. 113. See also Thucyd. Lib. vii.

CHAP. XX.

On the Testimonies of Ancient Writers, with respect to the Soil and Climate of Judæa, confirming the Sacred Descriptions of that Country.

THE early promises which were made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with respect to the multiplication of their seed, seem to imply a proportionable fertility in the land of Canaan, which it was foretold at the same time should be given to them*.

The prophetic assurances also which described the land, spoke of it as abounding with cattle and productions favourable to the support of human life.

Jacob, in expressing his blessing to Issachar, promises, that “the land should be pleasant;” and to Asher, that “his bread should be fat;” of Judah he says, that “binding his fole unto

* Gen. xii. 7. xiii. 14, 15. xxvi. 4. xxvii. 28. xxxv. 11, 12.

“ the vine, and his ass’s colt unto the
 “ choice vine, he shall wash his garments in
 “ wine, and his clothes in the blood of
 “ grapes, that his eyes shall be red with
 “ wine, and his teeth white with milk ;” and
 when God appeared to Moses, he declared
 that “ he would bring the Israelites into a
 “ good land and a large, into a land flowing
 “ with milk and honey * ;” figures, expres-
 sive of abundance and the luxuries of a
 simple state.

The whole history of the Jews tends to
 demonstrate the accomplishment of the pro-
 mises, with respect to the wonderful en-
 crease of this peculiar people. Notwith-
 standing the frequent wars in which the
 nation was engaged, and the wasting dis-
 persions by which they were scattered, the
 country continued to maintain prodigious
 numbers in every age, excepting during the
 captivity.

The support of those numbers required
 a very large produce, and Judæa appears
 to have displayed a considerable fertility.
 The Sacred Writers describe, in interest-
 ing pictures, the multitude of its cattle

* Gen. xlix. 12. xiv. 20. Cant. v. 12. Gen. xlix. 8. New-
 ton on the Prophecies, lib. i. 8. and Cant. iv. 11.

covering the hills, the luxuriance of its trees, and the rich produce of its vineyards. The grapes brought to Moses exhibited an early proof of the fidelity of the prophetic description; and the vast multitudes which are enumerated on various occasions confirmed the assurance. The people, not being addicted to commerce, cultivated the soil with regular industry, and with that attachment, which resulted from the nature of a tenure, which could not be alienated permanently, as the land reverted to its original proprietor every fifty years.

That the divine blessing encreased the exuberance of the soil may reasonably be supposed, as indeed was especially promised; and a miraculous plenty must have been imparted every sixth year, or the land could not have remained uncultivated on the Sabbatical year, as we learn that it did, even from Heathen writers, who mention also many particulars which tend to confirm the report which has been given.

Notwithstanding these testimonies, however, Mons. de Voltaire, in order to indulge a sarcastic vein against the historical accounts of the Old Testament, gives vent to some remarks upon the subject, which are

not founded on accurate information, and which do not authorise any supposition of exaggeration in the sacred accounts.

This writer, in his account of the Crusades, represents Judæa to have been, as he describes it to be “at present, one of the worst of all the inhabited countries of Asia, being almost entirely covered with parched rocks, with one layer of soil, and such as, if cultivated, might be compared to Switzerland.”

It is to be observed, however, that this unfair writer has totally overlooked many circumstances which explain and confirm the accounts of the Sacred Historians ; and it would tend but little to justify his remarks, even if he could prove that the soil of Judæa is now barren ; since it would not be unwarrantable to contend, that the Divine favour might have conferred extraordinary fertility upon it in former times, and the Divine curse have afterwards condemned it to sterility ; but, in truth, there is no proof that it is now barren ; on the contrary, travellers most entitled to credit, represent it as more fruitful than the best part of the coast of Syria or Phœnicia,

the soil being richer and more productive * ; while there is sufficient evidence that it was formerly very productive and capable of sustaining its vast population.

The great number of inhabitants which this country is represented to have supported, was not more than the exertion of the nation and their wars might seem to have required ; and, indeed, the accounts upon this subject are confirmed by Heathen testimonies and by Josephus.

Tacitus describes the climate as dry, and the soil as fruitful, exuberant in its produce, like that of Italy, and bearing the palm and the balsam †, the former of great size and beauty. This account is attested by Pliny

* See Shaw's Travels and Observations, p. 365. Edit. Oxford. See also P. de Valle, Lett. iii. and 1 Kings v. 11. 2 Chron. xiv. 8.—Dr. Shaw gives the following extract from P. de Valle, as confirming his accounts of the fertility of the Holy Land. “ Il paese per donde camminavamo era bellissima. Tutti collini, valli e monticelli fruttiferi. “ Le convalle de Mambre e a punto comme tutti gli altri “ paesi dintorno, che quantunque montuosi e sassosi sono “ pero fertilissimi,” Let. xiii. “ Le montagne e valli bien “ che siano alpestri sono nondimeno tutte frutissere per la “ diligenza degli agricoltori.” Id. Lett. iii.

† Hist. lib. v. § 6. Justin. lib. xxxvi. c. 3.

and Galen*. Josephus represents the soil to be rich and fruitful, and he quotes writers and historians †, as confirming his report; he particularly describes the district Genesareth, as admirable for its fertility and beauty, for a soil which did not refuse to receive any kind of fruit, producing nuts, which required a wintry climate, and palms which are nourished by heat; and at the same time figs and olives, which flourish best in the temperature of a soft air, so that nature seemed ambitious of collecting productions of the most opposite character, and of establishing an amicable contention, in which each season seemed to claim possession of the place as its own. He adds, that the climate not only produced different fruits, but preserved them for a long time; that grapes and figs were supplied for ten months without interruption, and other fruits during the whole year. Strabo describes part of the country as rocky, but commends that about Jordan or Jericho. Josephus observes, that the Jews were desirous of increasing their numbers, from which, it may be presumed,

* Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. xii. c. 25. lib. xiii. c. 4. lib. xiv. c. 20.

† De Bell. Jud. lib. ii.

that the land was capable at least of supporting its inhabitants. Whatever sterility and want of population may be complained of at present, should be attributed in great measure to the influence of political changes, to the vexatious tyranny and bad policy of the government, and to the consequent neglect of the inhabitants, and their want of industry and numbers to work the soil, as well as to the harassing incursions to which they are exposed from the Arabs*.

It is to be observed also, that in the time in which the great population prevailed in Judæa, it was sustained under favourable circumstances resulting from the simplicity of manners, and the frugal habits of the people. The land was not covered by those masses of buildings, and those extensive gardens, woods, and parks, which occupy in modern times such large spaces of productive ground in other countries—All was open to cultivation or to pasture.

As the people also were interdicted from commerce, and few devoted themselves to the arts of refinement or to science, no

* See *Lettres de Quelques Juifs. a Mons. de Voltaire*, vol. i. and Shaw.

class was exempted, nor was any part uncultivated.

If the country was mountainous, it is to be considered that the extension of the surface thence resulting, and containing according to Hecatæus three millions of acres afforded great range for cattle in climates of the latitude of Judæa; it is the mountain which affords short and rich pasture, in which the flocks particularly delight, and by which their flesh and milk are improved, hence it was that Hebron was granted to Caleb as a favour.

It cannot reasonably be conceived that writers, who addressed their countrymen, and who professed to reveal the promises of God, and to relate their accomplishment, could describe that as fertile, which in fact was barren, or speak of a population which did not exist; and there are still sufficient proofs of the fruitfulness of the land to justify this persuasion.

Nothing can be more unphilosophical than to rest on the vague and hasty reports of some travellers, who have visited this country in later times, and to set them up, even when contradicted by others more in-

telligent * in the present day, in opposition to the description of those, who were contemporaries and witnesses of the particulars which they relate, and who, if they had stated falsehoods, could not have excited the respect which they received.

* As Shaw, Maundrell, &c.

CHAP. XXI.

On the Heathen Testimonies which verify the Accomplishment of the Jewish Prophecies.

THE accounts in profane history, which bear record to the completion of the Jewish prophecies, are so numerous that they will scarcely admit of any summary statement.

A concise sketch of the subject in its outline, and more remarkable illustrations, is all that can be here attempted, and a reference to more enlarged and detailed expositions will be made in the notes, in order that those, who wish to pursue enquiries, may be furnished with some lines of direction.

The accomplishment of the prophecies, which related to the descendants of the Patriarchs, and especially to the tribe of Judah, as likewise of those, which respected the different nations rendered instrumental to the punishment of the Jews, or become the objects of Divine displeasure for their conduct towards

them, may be exemplified in some striking instances.

Thus the character and fate of the descendants of Noah; the enlargement of Japhet; the ascendancy of the posterity of Shem; the servitude of Canaan; the multiplication of the seed of Abraham in Isaac; and the preservation of the line of Ishmael in the Arabs distinctly characterized, are confirmed by every part of ancient and modern history*.

The prophecies relating to the destruction of Nineveh †, Babylon ‡, and Tyre §; the base and permanent degradation of Egypt ||; and the victories of Cyrus, foretold by name two centuries before his appearance, in a manner which does not occur in any other instance, are eminently entitled to attention.

The whole passage from Isaiah, relative to

* See Newton's Dissert. on the Prophecies, vol. i. c. 2, for Heathen testimonies.

† Comp. Nahum and Zephaniah with Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Lucian.

‡ Comp. Jeremiah and Isaiah with Herodotus, Xenophon, and Arrian.

§ Comp. Ezekiel with Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. i. §. 21. Antiq. lib. x. c. 7, and Quintus Curtius, lib. iv. c. 4.

|| Ezekiel xxix. 14, 15. 18, 19. comp. with Joseph. lib. x. c. 6. 9. Euseb. præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 40. Herod. Diod. Sicul. Plin. Maxim. Tyrius. Polyæn. Stratag. l. 7. c. 9. Justin.

this conqueror, is so remarkable, and specifies particulars so exactly fulfilled, that no part of it should be omitted.

For thus said the Lord, of Cyrus, “He
 “ is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my
 “ pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, thou
 “ shalt be built; and to the temple, thy
 “ foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the
 “ Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose
 “ right hand I have holden, to subdue na-
 “ tions before him; and I will loose the loins
 “ of kings, to open before him the two-
 “ leaved gates; and the gates shall not be
 “ shut: I will go before thee, and make the
 “ crooked places straight. I will break in
 “ pieces the gates of brass; and cut in sun-
 “ der the bars of iron: and I will give thee
 “ the treasures of darkness, and hidden
 “ riches of secret places*, that thou mayest
 “ know that I, the Lord, which call thee by
 “ thy name, am the God of Israel. For
 “ Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine
 “ elect, I have even called thee by thy
 “ name; I have surnamed thee, though thou
 “ hast not known me. I am the Lord, and
 “ there is none else, there is no God beside

* See Plin. lib. xxxiii. c. 15. Edit. Harduin.

“ me: I girded thee, though thou hast not
 “ known me; that they may know from the
 “ rising of the Sun, and from the West, that
 “ there is none besides me. I am the Lord,
 “ and there is none else*.”

If, after reading this prophecy, we consider the character and history of Cyrus, as described by Xenophon, who, in the very language of Isaiah, styles him God's Shepherd, together with the accounts of his victories and of the capture of Babylon, we cannot but be struck with the conviction, that the great and distinguished qualities, by which he was rendered, what Isaiah portrays him to be, “ a man more precious than fine gold, “ than the golden wedge of Ophir†,” were bestowed upon him by an especial appointment of Providence, to render him capable of “ punishing the world for their evil, and “ the wicked for their iniquity, and to cause “ the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and “ lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.”

Cyrus seems to have considered himself as destined by the Fates to empire‡, he gave out as the signal for battle, “ Jupiter

* Isaiah xlv. 28. xlv. 1—6.

† Ibid. xiii. 11, 12.

‡ Herod. Clio. l. 204. 209, 210.

“ the succourer ;” and his soldiers, who followed him, were inspired with a kind of religious ardour. Josephus relates, that he proclaimed throughout Asia, that the God, whom the Hebrews worshipped, had foretold his name by the prophets, and that he should build him an house at Jerusalem, and that this was made known to him by Isaiah’s writings, composed 140 years before the temple was destroyed. He adds, that Cyrus, on reading the prophecy, was seized with an ardent desire to fulfil it, and permitted the Jews to return and to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, promising them assistance and contribution from the neighbouring rulers and governors, as was accordingly imparted. He goes on to say, that Cyrus restored the sacred vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken away : and that he sent an epistle to the governor of Syria, informing him that the expense of rebuilding the temple was to be defrayed out of the royal revenues, and enumerating the sacred vessels which were to be restored *. Cyrus might have derived from the Jews the conviction relating to the immortality of the soul which he expressed at his death.

* Antiq. b. xi. c. 1. and Theodoret.

CHAP. XXII.

On the Heathen Morality.

THEY who look to the Heathen morality as it is occasionally displayed in the works of Aristotle, Plato, Xenophon, and Cicero, and in later times in the writings of Seneca, Epictetus, and Plutarch, will be often inclined to regard it as entitled to considerable respect. It is in many instances refined by the most successful efforts of reason, and matured by the deductions of long observation and experience. In some places we seem to trace the finger of God inscribing moral impressions on the heart; and at others, we behold the highest discoveries of philosophy pushed so far, as to exhibit a kind of anticipation of that knowledge, which was afterwards revealed, or some acquaintance with the Divine precepts imparted in the Gospel.

Some instructions of eternal wisdom, spread abroad on the scattered leaves of revelation,

or handed down by tradition, demonstrate that God “at no time left himself without a “ witness,” or withheld entirely that light, which might direct the conscience. Inter-mixed, however, with the just principles which at all times had established their authority, there were every where to be discovered the defects of imperfect knowledge. Erroneous opinions, and fallacious maxims, mingled their deceptions with the dictates of truth; while motives of false glory, and objects of pernicious tendency, were allowed to excite the evil passions, and mislead the bewildered imaginations of men.

As the traces of the Patriarchal Faith disappeared, the various superstitions of antiquity prevailed, and they generated false and pernicious systems of ethics in proportion as men receded from the standard of primeval simplicity. A depravity of moral principle was to be traced in connection with the prevalency of erroneous notions, as to the nature of the deities who were worshipped.

The withdrawing of the mind from a contemplation of the attributes of God to a consideration of the qualities of those objects of worship, which were substituted in his place—the worshipping of the creature rather than

the Creator, led to every kind of misapprehension and error. The veneration entertained by the Assyrians and Persians for the elements of the visible world ; the gross superstition of the Egyptians for objects in the animal and material systems ; and the idolatrous regard paid by the Greeks and Romans to deified mortals, could not be expected to produce any codes of morality of a pure and unexceptionable character.

A knowledge of the relation which subsisted between God and his creatures, and a sense of a peculiar sanctity conferred on the Jews by the divine favour, produced a conviction of strong obligations to holiness, among that people, whilst their minds were enlightened by the purity of their faith : but upon a general and collective view of the Pagan discoveries, and upon a consideration of what might be composed from a combination of the most perfect and improved theories of unenlightened nations, we shall find that there is nothing, which can be framed from the united splendor of the Heathen systems, that can exhibit even a faint shadow of excellency, when compared with the Gospel.

Without judging it necessary to enter into any particular detail upon this copious subject, it may be observed, that the deficiency

of the Heathen codes is shewn, as well by the inferiority of the motives, as by the defect of the principles.

It is sufficiently evident, that wherever the foundation is unsound, the structure must fail; and that the Heathen morality rested on a false basis, will appear, if we reflect that it was framed without sufficient knowledge of the attributes and will of God, and without any just apprehension of the fallen nature of man.

It is true that many Heathen writers proposed the attainment of the divine favour as a principle of virtue; this however is ever blended with an undue deference to motives of earthly consideration, and the favour which is looked to is not that of a being whose perfections are defined, so as to become the objects of well regulated piety or humble imitation.

The Almighty is not viewed in that light in which he is disclosed to us; and such service was not enjoined as is consistent with the condition of a being, guilty of transgression, and every way accessible to temptation and sin. The motives, which revelation tends to excite, are all of the purest and most excellent kind, directly conspiring to the

production of holy principles and upright conduct, without constraint, without reference to human observation *: they aim at effecting the renewal of a fallen nature, the re-establishment of that similitude to God in which we were first created.

One of the characteristic proofs indeed of the divine origin and benevolent designs of the religion, revealed to us by God, is, that it inculcates internal purity with as much force as external actions, evidently demonstrating, that it is not the object of the Sacred Writers to engage merely nominal professors of their faith, but to produce a sincerity of attachment, of which God only can judge.

It is not indeed to be denied, that the Heathens sometimes inculcated the necessity of inward purity of intention ; and we know that Herodotus, the earliest of the Greek historians, relates a remarkable story of Glaucus, who, being regarded as a man of great integrity, upon an occasion of a considerable sum of money being deposited in his hands, and an opportunity occurring of his detaining it from the owners, if he would forswear himself, consulted the oracle

* 2 Chron. xxv. 1, 2. * Psal. li. 6. Isai. lviii. 3—8. Prov. v. 21. Matt. vi. 18. Rom. ii. 29.

at Delphi as to what conduct he should observe : upon which he received for answer to this effect ; “ that it might appear advantageous for a short time thus to succeed by
 “ a false oath, and to take unjust possession
 “ of the wealth, and that therefore he might
 “ swear, since death awaited even the
 “ faithful man, but that an invisible power
 “ should arise from perjury, swift and relentless to seize, which should destroy the
 “ house and the whole race, while the generation of the just man should best succeed
 “ in the end *.”

The historian adds that Glaucus entreated the gods to forgive him what he had expressed ; but he was informed, that to tempt God, and to commit the action, were all one ; and, though he sent for the Milesian guests, whose money he had detained, and delivered it to them, yet the historian adds, that in his time there remained no progeny of the house of Glaucus, but it was entirely rooted out in Sparta. “ Compare the words
 “ of the oracle,” says a learned writer, who comments upon this relation, “ with those of
 “ Zechariah, in which he says, “ I looked
 “ and behold a flying roll,—then he said

“ unto me, this is the curse that goeth forth
 “ over the face of the whole earth,”—and
 “ it shall enter into the house of the thief,
 “ and into the house of him that sweareth
 “ falsely by my name, and it shall remain
 “ in the midst of his house, and shall con-
 “ sume it with the timber thereof, and the
 “ stones thereof*.”

Juvenal (who refers to the story) and Persius have expressed sentiments very similar to those which are introduced in the relation of Herodotus.

It is pleasing to see the former writer, who was a stern moralist, and who, amidst his coarse and indignant strictures against vice, delivers the most animated lessons of virtue, lay down principles, which might seem to be derived from the stores of revealed wisdom.

“ Whoever,” says he, “ conceives any
 “ wickedness within himself, has the same
 “ guilt as if he had committed it†.” Ovid had before delivered a sentiment not dissimilar, that “ he who does not commit an action
 “ merely because it is not lawful, does in

* See Lardner. Zech. v. 3, 4.

† Sat. xiii. l. 209, 210.

“ fact commit it ;” that is, manifests a disposition equally culpable ; again, “ though
 “ we should keep the body, yet, if the mind
 “ is adulterous, adultery will be committed
 “ in private.” Seneca also observes, that “ he
 “ is incestuous, even without incest, who desires to commit the crime ;” and in another place, that “ he is not undeservedly placed
 “ in the number of offenders, who is modest
 “ only from regard to reputation, and not
 “ from respect to himself.” Persius finely represents a well ordered love of justice, and piety in the hallowed recesses of the heart, and a mind imbued with a generous rectitude, as more acceptable to the gods than the greatest offerings of wealth *. It is to be remembered, however, that some of these passages were written after the diffusion of Christian knowledge.

The sentiments are the more remarkable, as we find even Josephus intimating his opinion, that bad designs were not objects of divine displeasure till carried into execution : thus, the historian, speaking of Antiochus Epiphanes, observes, that “ he confessed at his death that he died for the injuries

* Sat. ii. lib. 73—75.

“ which he had committed against the
 “ Jews ;” and Josephus adds, that “ he
 “ wonders how an Heathen writer, (Poly-
 “ bius) who had treated of him, could say
 “ that he perished because he had purposed
 “ to plunder the temple of Diana, in Persia ;”
 for, says Josephus, “ to intend a thing and
 “ not to perform it, is not worthy of punish-
 “ ment ;” a notion so erroneous, that it could
 proceed only from that judicial blindness,
 which characterized the Jews about the time
 that they rejected Christ, when they forgot
 the instructions of Solomon, who commanded
 them to “ keep the heart with all diligence,
 “ for out of it were the issues of life ;” and
 the declarations of their prophets, that
 “ God was of purer eyes than to behold
 “ evil *, and weighed the thoughts ;” and
 when therefore, as Isaiah had foretold, “ a
 “ marvellous thing was effected and a won-
 “ der, for the wisdom of their wise men had
 “ perished, and the understanding of their
 “ prudent men was hid.”

The national spirit, which was cherished
 by the different states of Pagan antiquity,

* Habak. i. 13.

was every where of an exceptionable character.

The eastern sovereigns aimed, with unbounded ambition, at the establishment and extension of despotic power; ruling, excepting in a few instances, with capricious tyranny and licentious indulgence, while their prostrate subjects were degraded and trampled down like the mire in the streets, and rendered base, superstitious, and vile in manners and conduct.

The Grecian states cherished a love of freedom, and a generous ardour for noble actions; but they manifested rarely a respect for justice in their contests with other nations, and little regard to the rights of humanity; while, in the internal regulations of their governments, they seldom adhered to the principles of moderation and equity. Their distinguished men excited jealousy and commotions by ambition; and the general classes of the community exhibited a spirit of base ingratitude towards their benefactors, an ungenerous suspicion of their most virtuous rulers, and an hatred of all, who were raised to distinction by pre-eminent qualities.

They calumniated those, who were most entitled to praise, and banished men, whose

talents did honour to the periods in which they lived, and who have transmitted the fame of their several countries to distant times, persecuting to expulsion and death those, whose justice and wisdom have excited the admiration of all succeeding ages.

The Romans professed to oppose tyranny, and to spare those subjected to their power ; but their object was universal dominion. They displayed the virtues of a stern and military people in rising to eminence, and particularly a noble patriotism and devotion to the public interest ; but their lusts engendered unceasing wars, and their internal state was disturbed and agitated with contests for an agrarian equality which never could exist, and with tumults of factious men clamouring for freedom, while they promoted sedition, and aimed at exorbitant power. Dissention and civil wars at length subjected them to imperial authority, which soon degenerated into the despotism of men, raised by military caprice to a short-lived and precarious power, or brought forward by the chance of revolutions : while the empire was shaken by internal enemies, or sunk in its decline into feebleness and decay.

It is the spirit of Christianity alone which moderating the views of sovereigns and states, and directing the measures of government to the legitimate objects of its institution—the promotion of the welfare of society, and the preservation of its moral interests, leads to an equitable consideration of the rights and independence of other nations, and to an unremitted regard to the well being of the community over which it presides. It is this spirit of just and reasonable policy, which inspire rulers with a desire of fulfilling the intentions of God, “who appointed them as a terror to evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well,” teaching them to promote, upon general and permanent principles, the interests of every class of society, and to ground the confidence of power on the observance of the just claims of every department.

But not only was the spirit of public policy, which prevailed in the councils of Pagan nations, often directly in opposition to the maxims of justice and the laws of morality, but even legislators violated the plainest dictates of nature, and neglected, in the particular designs which they enter-

tertained, the manifest distinctions between right and wrong. Infidelity and customs destructive of all modesty were countenanced by Plato*.

The exposure of infants†, and the putting to death of children who were weak or imperfect in their form, was allowed by Lycurgus and by others‡.

Theft was permitted in Egypt§ and Sparta||.

The laws of nations were not established upon any foundation commensurate with the importance of their objects; they were ill defined and little respected. War, particularly in its earliest periods, was little better than pillage and piracy¶. A respect for heralds and ambassadors**, and for the claims of the vanquished, was often violated.

The systems of philosophy also, framed under imperfect apprehensions of the attri-

* Euseb. præp. Evang. Plato.

† Children were placed on the floor to see whether their fathers would take them up; hence “*puerum sustulit*” is applied to education. See Adams’s Rom. Antiq.

‡ Tertul. c. 9. Terent. Hecyra.

§ Diodor. Sicul. lib. i. Grot. lib. ii. c. 1—3.

|| Plutarch. Lycurg.

¶ Homer, and Thucydides, lib. i. Scholiast and Jutin, lib. iv. c. 3.

** Herod. lib. vii. c. 133.

butes of God, and of the real nature and condition of man, exhibited every where their defects, and illustrated every variety of error*.

But while instruction was thus erroneous and defective, it would be unfair to examine the codes of Heathen morality without reference to the unenlightened state in which men lived; and it would be equally inconsistent with justice to decide upon the character of these codes, by detached passages and occasional sentences, without regard to the scope and object of their statements: we find Cicero sometimes considering revenge as a virtue †; and at other times declaring that nothing was more laudable than a placable disposition and clemency.

A fundamental defect, however, necessarily existed, in the ground upon which every theory was raised from mistaken notions of the unimpaired dignity of man; from a want of just convictions on the subject of human nature, vitiated as it is in its propensities, and subject to temptations from an evil and apostate spirit.

* See the learned work of Dr. Ireland, *Paganism and Christianity compared*.

† Cicer. de Invent. 2. ad Anton. et Grot.

Hence, instead of lowliness, which is itself a virtue of the most excellent character, and productive of every thing that is great and good, men were taught to cherish a proud elation of mind, aiming at distinction, confiding in its own vigour, and presuming on its own independent support. Hence also, instead of a passive and enduring fortitude, they encouraged a daring spirit of military glory, which, though connected with patriotism, and softened by a remembrance of the offices of friendship and the intercourse of hospitality, yet generated a great severity, and often cruel and vindictive excesses ; excited a love of enterprize which disregarded the appeal of justice and humanity ; and stimulated feelings which led men to become ostentatious and inflated ; to give vent to a contemptuous asperity against others, and to express their sentiments of defiance and indignation even against the gods.

The martial spirit excited by an admiration of the heroes who destroyed the monsters which ravaged the earth, and opposed the tyrants who oppressed mankind, fostered by every institution, inspired by eloquence, and in Greece inflamed by poetry, prompted men to enterprises in which the boundaries

of justice were transgressed; and produced an overbearing temper, which carried its effects into every private scene; while the existing superstition infused but little of mildness or benevolence to direct the sensibilities, and soften the manners of social and domestic life.

Where the general sentiment was thus prejudicial, it was not to be expected that the conduct of individuals should be regulated by moderation and forbearance.

Self-confidence, the prolific source of evil, seemed every where to prevail, utterly devoid of that caution which results from a conscious sense of unworthiness, and of the evil bias of a fallen nature, and directly opposite to that humility, which while it leads the Christian to regard his best exertions as insufficient, yet stimulates to every effort which may produce a conformity to the will of God.

In the earlier times, among the Greeks and Romans, much temperance and modesty were to be found, particularly in the female character, but these virtues were gradually impaired under the influence of luxury and corruption*.

* *Corrumpere et corrumpi seculum vocatur.* Sallust Catalin.

It may be observed also, that the sports and public games, which at all times were passionately admired, tended to keep up a harsh and inexorable sternness, little favourable to the virtues of domestic life. The combats of gladiators, and the savage spectacles exhibited of animals tearing or destroying each other, were amongst the amusements of ages highly civilized; at which females of the greatest refinement, the diffident virgin, and the dignified matron, did not scruple to appear, and even to give the signal for the death of those who bled for their diversion.

These sights, while they were calculated to deaden all the sensibilities of the human mind, and to destroy the delicacy of the female character, tended to render the sex callous and depraved, and we are not surprised at the effrontery and corruption which the Roman satirist attributes to the noble women of his time*.

Notwithstanding, however, these descriptions, much of humanity and benevolence was occasionally displayed in the scenes of public and private life, among the Greeks

* Juvenal, sat. vi. l. 397—440. et passim.

and Romans; and the writings of Plato, Socrates, Cicero, and others, abound with noble sentiments of philanthropy, and with passages expressive of great benevolence. Terence, in his interesting character of Chremes, makes him declare, that as a man, he deemed nothing relating to human nature foreign to himself*: and Juvenal, in a similar spirit, enquires, what good man ever regarded any evil as unconnected with his own case; and he remarks, that this compassionate temper distinguishes man from the brute creation, and characterizes minds capable of divine things†. Notwithstanding also pride and revenge were too generally fostered among the Heathens; there are not wanting examples of many who recommended and practised forgiveness of injuries.

Menander represents him to be the best of men, who has learnt to bear injuries better than others‡; and Ariston, the Spartan, to one who said, "it is royal to do good to friends and to do evil to enemies," replied, "rather it is so, to do good to friends,

* Heauton, act 1. sc. 1.

† Juv. sat. xv. l. 142.

‡ Grotius, lib. iv. c. 12.

“ and to render those who are enemies, “ friends :” Dion also, the liberator of Sicily, observed, that the true demonstration of philosophy is to be placed in this, that every one should be kind towards friends ; but if any one is affected by injury, he should be open to entreaty, and indulgent towards those who have committed it. Juvenal considers revenge as the mark of a little mind * ; and many other liberal sentiments of benevolence and kindness might be produced from other writers †.

They are to be found, however, most abundantly in the works of those authors who lived after the promulgation of the Gospel, as in the writings of Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the last of whom seems to have borrowed literally a precept from the Gospel, when he directed us to do to another what we would that he should do to us.

The abandoned licentiousness of manners which prevailed among the Heathens has already been sufficiently stated. It was the more deplorable, we have observed, inasmuch as it was not only tolerated, but often sanc-

* Sat. xiii. l. 190, 191.

† Horace, &c.

tioned by the religion which was to direct the conduct of men, and was encouraged by the deities whom they were taught to revere. Even the most eminent moralists tolerated the greatest abominations *. Nevertheless, there were many distinguished examples of noble virtue, as well those which evinced a controul over human passions, as those which were calculated to illustrate the mild and benevolent affections; they may be referred to, as patterns for individual qualities, and as exhibiting in striking colours the extent to which courage, patriotism, and generosity might be carried. As models of general excellence not many Heathen examples have been produced; perhaps, however, those of Aristides, Socrates, and Plato, among the Greeks, and of Cato and Cicero among the Romans, may be mentioned as conspicuous, at times much advanced in the virtues of civilized life. Regarding Socrates, as confessedly the most eminent among illustrious Heathens, as he who is least unworthy to be brought into comparison with any sincere follower of Christianity, we soon discover the inferiority even of the masters of

* Euseb. Præp. Evan. l. xiii. c. 20.

Heathen philosophy to the disciples of Christ.

But farther, in the contemplation of the Heathen characters there is certainly much to admire, in the fearless intrepidity with which men regarded danger, and in the unbroken spirit in which they sustained adversity.

These marks of greatness, however, though they had a noble air, were often fallacious, as founded on a pretended apathy, which cannot exist; or on a proud independence not suited to the weakness of human nature, or sufficiently aware of the necessity of Divine aid.

Fortitude not sustained by religious spirit often failed, or rushed in despair, upon self-destruction. In every point of view, it was far inferior to the patient endurance which the Christian has been taught to cultivate, in confidence on the Supreme Being, and in resignation to appointments which he believes to be mercifully concerted in regard to the future welfare and happiness of men.

The Heathens did not understand the considerations upon which afflictions are dealt out in a probationary state. St. Paul referring, it should seem, to the wisdom of the

East, treats it as “science falsely so called *;” and speaking partly of the Greek philosophy, he considers it as “vain deceit founded on “tradition †.” Some sects supposed all things to be regulated by chance ‡; and few had any just apprehensions of the design of Providence in subjecting man to circumstances of punishment and trial. A sentiment of Seneca, indeed, upon the subject is interesting and reasonable: as however it was written after the promulgation of Christianity it might be derived from the Scriptures, and possibly from the writings and example of St. Paul, whom Seneca might have seen at Rome when brought there in bonds, after his appeal to Cæsar, and as Lardner supposes, when the Apostle was called before Nero. “If,” observes Seneca, “there be a Providence, how comes it “to pass, say some, that good men labour “under affliction and adversity, and wicked “men enjoy themselves in ease and plenty? “my answer is, that God deals with us as a “good father does by his children, he tries “us, he hardens us, he fits us for himself, “he keeps a strict hand over those that he

* 1 Tim. vi. 20. † Coloss. ii. 8. ‡ Juv. sat. xiii. l. 86.

“ loves *, and by the rest he does, as we do
 “ by our slaves, he lets them go on in li-
 “ cence and boldness †.”

Epictetus, though a slave and lame, considered himself as a favourite of Heaven, but he also lived after the diffusion of the Gospel, and might have learnt from its precepts, not to attach too much to external circumstances. If these considerations had operated in earlier times, suicide would not have been deemed noble, and Cato would not have inflicted death upon himself; an action which Seneca mentions not only without censure, but with apparent admiration. It was upon these subjects particularly that the Heathens wanted just information; and melancholy illustrations of the necessity of Divine instruction, to enable men to bear up against the vicissitudes and afflictions of human life, are presented in the frequent instances of illustrious men who terminated their ill-directed views and disappointed hopes in self-destruction.

If however the Heathens very generally failed from the delusion of a spirit alienated from God, which led them to trust too much

* See Hebrews xii. 6.

† Morals, c. viii.

to themselves, while it deceived their judgment, and counteracted all the efforts of reason; yet the exposure of human weakness, and the failure of all the successive schemes which were devised by men to instruct and support mankind, tended to produce very salutary impressions, and furnished memorable proofs of the insufficiency of natural religion. It pleased God before the destruction of the Heathen systems, to exhibit in the example of Christ and his disciples the most striking illustration of Christian fortitude, and the most exalted patterns of virtue;—to shew, in the constancy of men persecuted only for righteousness, and who were offered exemption from torture if they would abjure the faith which they professed, greater firmness and resolution than the Heathen heroes in the moments of the warmest ardour had displayed amidst the applauses of those around them.

CHAP. XXIV.

On the Opinions entertained with respect to Atonement for Sin, and the Propriety of Prayer and Sacrifice.

THERE seems to be nothing in which the traditions and opinions of the Heathens bear stronger testimony to the doctrines of Scripture, than the general conviction which prevailed of the necessity of an atonement for sin, and of the intervention of a Divine Mediator.

The revelation imparted by Moses disclosed the curse of God against our first parents, and the entailed consequences on their descendants; it opened the promise of reconciliation, it pointed to the Messiah, and it instituted preparatory rites and services.

Much of the religious worship of Heathen antiquity was founded on the conviction of the necessity of some mediatorial atonement. The belief indeed of an entailed guilt affect-

ing the descendants of wicked men, was very commonly entertained among ancient nations *, particularly among the Grecians.

Prayer, which was a propitiatory service, early and universally established, had sometimes a reference to this persuasion of transmitted guilt. It was offered up by all nations with a view to deprecate wrath, as well for entailed sins as for present offences, and to avert the punishment of them. It was sometimes, however, disregarded in the wantonness of speculative opinion by philosophers of eminence †.

The institution of sacrifice may be supposed to have taken its rise from a desire of averting the effects of the fall. It is probable that the skins with which God clothed our first parents were obtained from beasts sacrificed, since flesh was not eaten, it should seem, till after the flood ‡. The appointment, at least, appears to have been respected in the religious offering of Abel, for while

* See in the account of Glaucus from Herodotus in the preceding chapter, and Exod. xx. 5. Horace Car. lib. i. Ode 28. l. 30, 31. and lib. iii. ode 6. l. 1.

† Alcibiad.

‡ Gen. ii. 16. ix. 3, 4.

the defect in the service of Cain consisted probably in its not including any acknowledgment of sin, inasmuch as it was merely a tribute to God of "the fruits of the earth," that of Abel, which was of the "firstlings of the flock," seemed to offer "a more excellent sacrifice *," an oblation for sin, prefigurative, possibly, "of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and including a confession of guilt, being accompanied by the effusion of blood, "without the shedding of which there was no remission."

If the original design of sacrifice was too often forgotten among the Jews, the prophets were instructed to remind them of it, and to reprove them for bringing their unavailing gifts without right impressions and just sentiments †.

These inspired men explained the spiritual import of ritual ordinances, and pointed to Christ as to the true Paschal Lamb, de-

* Magee, vol. i. p. 81. l. 212. vol. ii. 3d edit. and Heb. xi. 4.

† Stanhope's Sermons, xiii. and Boyle's Lectures, vol. i. p. 79. 794. Kennicott's Dissert. p. 224, as quoted by Magee, disc. and dissert. vol. ii. p. 78. 1 Sam. xv. 22. Ephes. ii. 5.

claring that the “chastisement of our peace
“should be upon him, and that by his stripes
“we should be healed*.”

Among the Heathens also, though in the popular notion, men regarded beasts and hecatombs as having an intrinsic worth, and believed that the incense ascended in acceptable fragrance to the gods, so that we find Xerxes and others offering up thousands of animals at the same time †; yet a more philosophical notion regarded them as expressive merely of guilt and propitiatory in their nature ‡.

Parkhurst, as Magee has observed, remarks, that it is known to every one who is acquainted with the mythology of the Heathens, how strongly and generally they retained the tradition of an atonement §, evidence of which may be adduced from Hesiod and Homer ||. Plutarch states, that no city was to be found in which there were not sa-

* Isaiah liii. 5, see also 1 Pet. ii. 24. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 10.

† Herod. lib. i. c. 50.

‡ Dion. Halicar. lib. i. Plin. xxviii. 30, 31. Cicero, i. Plutarch par Mon. Fonteu. Middleton's Life of Cicero. p. 304. Lactant de Vit. Beat. lib. vii. c. 8.

§ *Εἷμα καὶ κρέας*, l. 338, and Magee on the preval. of Heathen Sacrif. p. 124. 128, and Horat. lib. i. Od. 2. l. 29.

|| Iliad, lib. i. l. 65. lib. ii. l. 550.

crifices to procure good and avert evil, and in the nature of the sacrifices, as well as in the forms and circumstances observed by the Heathens in their sacrifices, we often meet with a resemblance between sacred and Heathen rites *.

It appears also, that the Heathens, by some traditionary knowledge, entertained a conviction of the efficacy of the shedding of blood, and believed that propitiatory sacrifices, accompanied with sorrow and good resolutions, might reasonably be tendered, and would be accepted by the Supreme Being. The fire which was kindled in this spirit on the Heathen altars was stolen as it were from heaven. Pausanius relates, that Phæstus directed the Sicyonians to pay divine honours to Hercules as to a God, who was before worshipped only as a Hero. In consequence of which they offered a lamb in the time of Pausanius, and burned the members upon the altar, eating a part and offering up the other †.

In referring to these dawnings of Divine light which opened upon an Heathen world, it is not meant that there existed any clear

* Acts vii. 42. Isaiah xxx. 29. Tertull. Apol. c. 9.

† Corinth. c. x. p. 133. Ed. Lips. 1696.

conviction of the fall and of its consequences in a penal subjection of man to the effects of sin; or that the notions which occasionally prevailed with respect to the efficacy of sacrifice, and the necessity of mediation, led the Heathens to regard their offerings in a just and figurative view, with relation to their primary objects; but only that some traditional notions had descended, and some vague apprehensions prevailed, which prepared the way for the reception of the great doctrines of the Gospel. Little of just conviction, indeed, appeared in the general practice and superstitions which arose; and with regard to the dreadful abomination which led men to attempt to propitiate the gods by human sacrifices, it must have been suggested by him who was the prompter to all evil; deriving no authority from the command given to Abraham with respect to Isaac, since this was intended only to try his faith and obedience, and to lead to the display of a prophetic representation; being withdrawn when the patriarch had been proved by the test proposed.

The notion of a moral purification also to be effected by water, whether derived from

a figurative application of its natural effects, or from some notion of the religious importance attached to it by the Jews, prevailed among the Heathens. This is the more remarkable if we consider the sanction which some have thought to have been given to the idea, by the water which flowed with the blood from the side of Christ when it was pierced; and by the appropriation of the element of water to the sacramental rite of baptism by Christ, to which St. John refers.

Some of the Heathens derided the credulity of those who attached an efficacy to the aspersions and purgations which were used; as might well be the case, when these rites were employed as having an intrinsic value without reference to the great purification to be introduced by Christ;

Fond men that think by water's chrystal flood
To cleanse away the horrid guilt of blood *.

The perverted notions of men led them to grant the most wicked and preposterous customs, on the belief which they entertained

Ah! nimium faciles, qui tristia funera cœdis,
Tolli flumineâ, posse, putatis, aquâ.

of the efficacy of blood *, and especially of that of human victims. Early and sad effects of such persuasion appear to have prevailed among the idolatrous nations of Canaan, previously to the settlement of the Israelites in that country ; and traces of a similar persuasion occasionally † shewed themselves among other nations. Diodorus represents the Carthaginians to have offered up human sacrifices ; and Pliny relates that vestiges of the horrible custom were to be found in Italy, as noticed in the twelve tables ; and that even so early as the year 657 a decree of the senate was passed in the consulship of Cornelius Lentulus and Publius Licinius Crassus, forbidding the abomination which till that time had been openly practised. Diodorus afterwards mentions the same custom as prevailing among the Druids ‡. Adeo ista (says Pliny) toto mundo consensere quanquam discordi et sibi ignoto §. The relations with respect to Curtius and the Decii are well known. Cicero, speaking of the opinions that the gods were to be propitiated by individuals devoting

* Magee on the Atonement, vol. i. p. 98, 99.

† Numb. xiii. 32. Isaiah xxxvii. 5.

‡ Bibliothec. lib. v. c. 31. vol. i. p. 354. Cæsar de Bell. Gall. lib. vi. § 16.

§ Nat. Hist. lib. xxx. c. 1.

themselves to death, enquires remarkably enough with respect to the deities who had required the devotion of such men as the Decii: *Quæ fuit eorum tanta iniquitas ut placari populo Romano non possent nisi viri tales occidissent* * ?

It is to be observed however, beyond what has been stated, that there is ground to presume that the Heathens looked, under vague and general convictions, to a mediator interceding by personal offices.

This persuasion is to be found among the earliest notions of the East.

The worship of the Sabæans was directed to the heavenly bodies, as to the supposed tabernacles of intelligent beings, who acted as mediators to conciliate the gods †.

Horace also, after describing events which indicated the displeasure of the gods, enquires to whom shall Jupiter give the part of expiating guilt, and he points to Apollo as the intercessor ‡.

* *De Nat. Deor.* lib. iii. § 6. Edit. Olivet. et pro M. Fontei, § 10.

† See Specimen, *Hist. Arab.* p. 138. Note ad *Albuf.* p. 257. Hottinger. *Hist. Orient.* lib. iv. c. 8. Hyde *Hist. Vet. Pers.*

‡ Lib. i. ode 2. See also Silius Ital. lib. iv. l. 767. Justin. lib. xviii. c. 6. Lucan, lib. i. l. 443. *Æneid*, lib. xi. l. 114—118, and Servius *Æneid*, lib. iv. l. 50. Plutarch de Vir. Illust. Macrobi. 1, iii. c. 5.

CHAP. XXV.

On the general Expectation, which prevailed among the Jews, and the Heathens, of the coming of some great Personage with Divine Authority to reform Mankind, and to restore them to Virtue and Happiness.

THE first promises imparted by God to mankind, those indeed given to Adam and the patriarchs, which were received and enlarged by the prophets in their communications to the Jews, excited the strongest persuasion of the coming of the Messiah; a persuasion prevailing from the earliest times, and stimulated to the most impatient eagerness, when the period, foretold by Daniel, approached.

Many circumstances, which demonstrated the strength of the Jewish hopes about the time of our Saviour, are mentioned, or alluded to by the Evangelists; and Josephus records many others. Herod destroyed the

registers of the Jewish families, that the claims of the descendants of David might not be precisely ascertained. He undertook also the building of the temple, a work which it was expected the Messiah would accomplish, and betrayed the most jealous apprehensions of designs against his throne *.

The Herodians carried their admiration of Herod so far as to regard him as the Messiah, and in order to celebrate his birth-day with suitable distinctions even at Rome, they placed, probably under this conviction, burning lamps crowned with violets in their windows †.

That there was often a disposition amongst the Jews to apply the prophecies relating to the Messiah, to Jesus, appears from many passages in the Gospel. But the prejudices of that people, notwithstanding they expected a Messiah with divine attributes, were offended by such high pretensions, when brought forward by one in the lowly condition in which Christ appeared; and by the contrast, between the power assumed of forgiving sins, which implied an equality with God, and the circumstances of a state destitute even of

* Antiq. lib. xv. c. 10. lib. xvi. c. 7.

† Tertullian Hæret. and Persius Sat. v. l. 180. et Annot.

human distinctions; and though they put him to death for those blasphemies, as they conceived them to be, they still cherished the hopes which prophecy had excited, and directed their expectations so eagerly to other persons, as to be easily led away by successive impostors *.

Josephus, speaking of the affairs of Judea under Felix, says, deceivers and impostors, upon pretence of divine inspiration aiming at innovation and changes, seduced the people to their destruction, and drew them into the wilderness, where they assured them God would shew them signs of liberty †; in which passage there seems to be an allusion to what the Jews often sought, some demonstration of divine power, as when they said to Christ, "shew us a sign." Theudas, and Judas of Galilee were among those that deceived their countrymen. The people, being frequently disappointed in their application of the prophecies, were led to believe, as they still continue to affirm, that the time of the Messiah was put off on account of their sins. After Pompey captured Jerusalem, about forty-three years before the Christian era,

* Joseph. lib. xviii. c. 1. Acts v. 36, 37. *ibid.* xxi. 38.

† De Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 13. § 4. see also *Antiq.* lib. xx. c. 7. § 6. *Antiq.* lib. x. iii. c. 5. § 1.

it was believed at Rome, that the Jews would produce, or, as Suetonius informs us on the authority of Julius Marathus, that nature was about to bring forth a king; and the historian adds, that the senate passed a decree, that no child born that year should be brought up, but that those who drew the prophecy to themselves defeated the decree*.

Josephus states, that what chiefly encouraged the Jews to the war, which terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem, was an ambiguous prophecy, which was found in their sacred books, that at that time some one within their country should obtain the empire of the world†; for they had received by tradition, that this was spoken by one of their own nation, and many of the wise men, he says, were deceived by the interpretation, for that in truth Vespasian, who was created emperor in Judea, was designated by the prophecy.

Vespasian attributed his success to Providence, and in consequence liberated Josephus, who had first flattered him with an application of the prophecies, which were in circulation, to his imperial person; and in

* Suet. Octav. Cæsar. August. c. 94.

† Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. vi. (7.) c. 5. § 4.

order to confirm the opinion that the title properly belonged to himself, when emperor, he pretended to perform miracles, in imitation it should seem, of those of Christ, as that of restoring sight to the blind *.

The proofs, that a general expectation of some great deliverer prevailed among the Heathens about the time at which Christ appeared, are very numerous. The expectation, whether originally drawn from a traditional knowledge of the earlier promises, or from colloquial intercourse with the Jews, was almost universal.

Information of what was foretold in the inspired writings had diffused itself; and there is reason to believe that the genuine and original verses of the Sibyl imparted notices upon the subject, framed in conformity to the predictions of Revelation, and obtained from the Jews, who were spread abroad into Asia, Egypt, and the Greek islands †.

The expectation among the Heathens, built upon these notices, and not limited by the specific descriptions which had been expressed by the prophets, had produced many wild and undefined opinions: and the confidence,

* Sueton. Flav. Vespasian. c. 7.

† Grotius on Matth. ii. 1.

which they excited, augmented in a degree, which seemed to correspond with the increased hopes of the Jews.

The disgrace, which attached to celibacy among the Heathens, and which is frequently alluded to, originated, probably, in the ardent desire which prevailed, from the earliest ages, to give birth to the expected Saviour*.

The superstitious persuasion also of a security to states, to be derived from the self-devoted death of individuals, which was so often productive of heroic actions among the Greeks and Romans, should seem to have some bearing towards the conviction, prevailing among the Jews, that “it was expedient that one man should die for the people.” Such a notion very generally prevailed. Thus, in addition to instances before referred to, it may be observed Pausanias relates, that when the Peloponnesians made war upon the Athenians because Theseus would not deliver the children of Hercules to Eurystheus, an oracle admonished the Athenians, that they could not obtain the victory unless one of the children of Hercules

* Vide the *Electra* of Sophocles, and the *Hecuba* of Euripides, and the Old Test. *passim*.

should devote himself to a voluntary death. In consequence of which, Macaria, the daughter of Hercules by Deianira, yielded herself to death, and thereby enabled the Athenians to become victorious, and the fountain Macaria was afterwards called by her name in honour of her memory*.

Philo expressed his opinions upon the subject of some expected deliverer, in a passage which will hereafter be considered. Among the Romans the expectation was so strong, a little before the coming of our Saviour, with respect to a King, who was to commence his reign and bring salvation, that Julius Cæsar contrived a motion in the senate that the title of king should be conferred upon him, when he was engaged in an undertaking against the Parthians, because it was alledged that it was written in the book of fate, (by which was meant probably the oracles of the Sibyl), that the Parthians could not be subdued but by a king, and that they must acknowledge him to be a king, who was a king in reality, if they would be safe †.

* Pausan. Attic. c. xxxii. p. 80. Edit. Lip.

† Dion Cassius, lib. xlv. Suetonius Jul. c. 79. Cicero de Divin. ii. c. 54, and Chandler's Defence, c. 1. See also Plutarch. Vit.

Cicero observes upon this occasion, that the keepers of the books should have been led to bring forth any thing from them rather than a king, which neither gods nor man would tolerate. It is worthy of remark, that the attempt of Cæsar to obtain this title afforded a subject of accusation against him, and ultimately became the cause of his assassination.

Lentulus attempted to derive some support from the same authority, applying to himself the prophecies, which were in circulation with respect to a sovereign, who should overcome every obstacle; and other ambitious men early caught at traditions upon the subject, of which they availed themselves for the promotion of political views*.

At the birth of Augustus, flattery directed the expectations of men to him, as to the predicted king; and a similar adulation continued to apply the descriptions, which were derived from tradition, from the Scriptures, and from intercourse with the Jews, to his offspring, and to many emperors long after the birth of Christ †.

* Cicero in Catil. Orat. iii. § 4.

† Suetonius Octav. August. cap. 94.

Tacitus and Suetonius mention prophecies, which existed upon the subject, and which they apply to Vespasian, in passages which will be separately considered, in examination of the testimonies in their respective works. Providence seems to have permitted the arrogant and blasphemous assumption of the character of the **Messiah** by vain and ambitious men, thereby to illustrate the general persuasion which prevailed that such a person would appear; and the futility of every other application of the prophecies, relating to him, except to the person of Christ.

The belief in the advent of a great deliverer, which men generally entertained, was often connected with the expectation of a return of the golden age, when Astræa was again to descend on earth, and virtue and peace were to flourish *.

The Sibyls in particular foretold the return of Astræa, called Mithras by the Persians, and Orus by the Egyptians.

* Seneca *Ædip.* act 2.

CHAP. XXVI.

On the Sibylline Verses and the Oracles.

THERE are few subjects more interesting in themselves, yet upon which it is more embarrassing to decide, than that of the authority of the Sibylline verses.

The question concerning them has been rendered of more difficult solution by the intermixture of some verses, which are comparatively of late production, with those which have been handed down from high antiquity ; the former having been, for the most part, manifestly inserted after the promulgation of Christianity, and such intermixture was alledged at a very early period to have taken place. *.

There appears, however, to be some reason to believe that the original verses ascribed to the Sibyls, though not inspired with any pro-

* Origen cont. Cels. lib. vii. page 369. Edit. Spenceri. 1677.

phetic intimations of futurity, were yet formed under apprehensions of the divine promises, which had been proclaimed to the patriarchs and Hebrew nation, and the knowledge of which was drawn from traditionary reports, or from the Scriptures.

Grotius is of opinion that the verses, preserved by the Quindecimviri at Rome, were Hebrew verses, and that the prophecy mentioned by Cicero to the Romans, "that if they would be safe they must acknowledge him to be king, who was king," was drawn from them *.

The Sibylline verses, of which fragments are dispersed through the writings of the fathers, and particularly in the works of Lactantius and Theophylact, are of uncertain origin: and whatever antiquity we may ascribe to the greater part of them, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to determine which are to be deemed original, and which are to be considered as spurious additions of later times, excepting, indeed, that those, which argue an acquaintance with particulars disclosed in the Gospel, must be deemed interpolations.

* Cicero in Catil. Orat. 3. et de Divina, lib. ii. c. 54. Salust. de Bell. Catil.

The Sibyls were females, supposed to have been endued with a fatidical spirit *.

It appears, from the account of Ælian and Lactantius, that there were ten Sibyls, whom on the authority of Varro he enumerates. The Persian or Chaldæan; the Lybian; the Delphic; the Cumæan of Italy; and another erroneously called the Cumæan of Æolia, and named by different writers Amalthea, Demophile, or Herophile; the Erythræan; the Samian; the Hellespontine; the Phrygian; the Tiburtine, or Albunean revered on the banks of the Anio. Among these the Erythræan, the Delphic, and the Cumæan of Italy †, were the most distinguished. The Erythræan, which some suppose to have been the same as the Chaldæan or Persian, was pre-eminent, as having been, probably, the most ancient. She is reported to have been a native of Erythræa, a town of Ionia, near Chios. Apollodorus, who represents her as his fellow-citizen, states her to have prophesied to the Greeks when preparing for their expedition to Troy, assuring them that they should succeed in destroying the

* Sibylla θεοεσσα, vid. Lactant. de falsâ Relig. lib. i. c. 6. Edit. Lug. Bat. et Annot.

† Servius in Virgil's Æneid, lib. vi. l. 69.

city : others place her later, in the time of Romulus, and even suppose her to have been the same with the Italic Cumæan Sibyl, of whom the well known story is related of her having burnt six, and sold her three remaining books to Tarquinius Priscus, or, as some say, to Tarquinius Superbus *.

The story was contrived, probably, with a view to assist the Roman kings in the early periods of their government, and to aid their controul over the minds of their subjects by a superstitious influence.

The books were placed in the capitol, and guarded with particular care in the strictest privacy. Tarquin encreased the number of them by collecting verses of the Sibyls from all the cities of Italy and Greece, and they were at length committed to the custody of the Quindecemviri †. They were burnt, however, with the capitol in the time of Sylla. When the capitol was rebuilt, C. Scribonius Curio proposed to the senate that ambassadors should be sent to Erythræa to collect what could be recovered of the Erythræan Sibyl's productions: and P. Gabinus,

* See Dion. Halicar.

† Lact. de fals. Rel. lib. i. Alex. ab Alexand. lib. iii. c. 16. p. 737. vol. 1, Edit. Lug. Bat.

M. Otacilius, and L. Valerius being sent, brought back a thousand verses ; and others were collected from different parts.

But these having been obtained in many instances from private persons, and copies of them having spread into circulation, they were no longer in the exclusive possession of the government, and could not, therefore, be applied to purposes of state policy. By the encrease of numbers, and the general dispersion of them, the reverence, which had been entertained for the original verses, was diminished, at the same time that they excited so much popular delusion, that Augustus collected private copies, and burnt to the amount of two thousand volumes, which were supposed to contain the destinies of Rome, and placed those, which he preserved, in the temple of Apollo. They appear afterwards to have been examined by Tiberius, who destroyed others : till at length Honorius, availing himself of the failure of a pretended prophecy in them with relation to Christianity, ordered the whole collection to be committed to the flames, A. D. 399.

The Romans, in general considered their verses as derived from the Cumæan Sibyl. Cicero, though he, as well as Plato and

Aristotle, entertained, or professed to entertain, some reverence for them, yet appears at other times inclined to disparage their authority, intimating that they were composed too artificially to indicate the enthusiasm of inspiration; and he observes, that they were contrived with such latitude, as to be capable of accommodation to different events and circumstances*.

Vossius thought that a great part of the Sibylline verses was fabricated by the Jews; and Pausanias says, that one Sibyl was called Sabba †, she is supposed to have traced her descent from Noah, and is sometimes called the Babylonian, and sometimes the Hebrew ‡. St. Austin states, that some thought that the Sibylla Erythræa was the same as the Cumæan, and that she had nothing of idolatry in her verses, but that she belonged to the City of God §, that is, was a Jewess, or within the pale of the universal church. The Sibylline verses, however, countenanced many abominable rites and customs. Justin Martyr conceives the Cu-

* De Divin. lib. ii. c. 54.

† Pausanias in Phoc. p. 828. Edit. Lips. Ælian, Suidas.

‡ Alex. ad Alexandro, lib. iii. c. 16.

§ De Civit. Dei. lib. xviii. c. 23.

mæan to have been of Babylonian descent, and the daughter of Berosus, and therefore to have lived in the time of Alexander, considering her, probably, the same as the Erythræan *. Virgil makes her contemporary with Æneas.

The verses, which we now possess, having been preserved in scattered and detached works of the Fathers and early writers, were collected again together. They were published at Basil, with a version of Castalio, and the notes of Xystus Betalieu, from manuscripts at Augsburg and Ferrara, as well as by other editors.

It is evident, from a general view of the descriptions produced in these verses, that much must have been added and interpolated after the promulgation of Christianity : and what was genuine in them, wherever it has reference to the facts and doctrines of Revelation, should seem to have been borrowed from the Jewish Scriptures, or from traditions which they confirmed.

As it must be considered difficult, if not impossible, to separate the original from the

* Cohort. ad Græc. See also Pausan. Phocic. lib. x. c. 12. p. 828.

spurious lines, we may observe of them collectively, that they treat of the existence of one Supreme and Eternal God, of the creation of man, and of his ejection from Paradise, of the building of Babel, and of the confusion of tongues *. They contain passages which resemble parts of the Jewish prophets, particularly of Zechariah and Hosea. They speak, as if prophetically, of the annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, and of the voice calling all to the straight path, and to baptism ; of the incarnation of the Son of the great God, to be clothed in flesh in the similitude of man, having in his name four vowels and two consonants ; of his coming to fulfil the law and not to destroy it ; of the nativity at Bethlehem, and of the offering of gold, myrrh, and frankincense to Christ ; of his being preserved and brought from Egypt ; of his miracles minutely described ; of his appearing on a foal, meek to all ; of his being cut off by a man ensnared by a reward ; of his sufferings and crucifixion, and of the peculiar circumstances of his death,

* Sibyl. orac. lib. iii. p. 223. Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 15. Theoph. ad Autolyc. lib. ii. p. 371. Bryant. Mythol. vol. iii. c. 10.

resurrection, and ascension; of the descent of the Spirit; of the punishment of the Jews, and the ruin of their deserted house. They betray also an acquaintance with the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, and of the pure manners of the primitive Christians; they speak of some of the Roman emperors by their initials in order to disguise their reference; and, lastly, they foretel the future reign of Christ on earth. Great part, therefore, of what we now possess is evidently spurious: Lardner and Cave conceive, that some of the Sibylline verses were forged in the time of Hadrian, and others in the reign of Antoninus; or of Commodus, in whose time Prideaux believes the collection to have been completed. Many are cited by Justin Martyr, who did not outlive A. D. 167—some lines might have been afterwards added.

While we reject the verses which bear such evident marks of forgery, we must still admit that those which were extant before the time of our Saviour, must have contained many allusions to the Messiah, which cannot be explained, but on the supposition either that they were drawn directly or indirectly from

the oracles of Hebrew revelation; or that God vouchsafed to impart some rays of prophetic knowledge to gild the distant prospects of the Heathen world.

Other early writers of the church besides those before-mentioned appeal to these verses, as Athenagoras, Tertullian, Jerom, and Clement of Alexandria. Some assert that St. Paul refers to them; and as a proof that part of the collection which has a prophetic cast is genuine, it has been remarked that Cicero mentions an acrostic in them*, and that an acrostic now appears in the collection which expresses “Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Saviour, and the cross†. It is probable, however, that Cicero alludes to a different sort of acrostic, and that the one now cited, was fabricated in later times, and possibly inserted by the compiler.

* De Divin. lib. ii. c. 54.

† Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς θεὸς υἱός, σωτὴρ, σταυρός, Prid. Conn. p. 2. b. 9. The letters put together compose the word ἰχθύς, a fish; and hence the fathers, with indiscreet zeal and insipid allegory, called Jesus, Piscem nostrum, the Christians, Piscinam. Tertul. de Baptism. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. i. c. 23.

It is a point which has been much controverted, whether the Heathen oracles were inspired with any information from beings of a more elevated nature than that of man, who might afford an insight into future times, subservient to the deception of those who consulted them.

The equivocal answers which they delivered, whether dictated by the caution of human policy, or by the contrivance of superior beings, whose knowledge of futurity may be as limited as our own, but whose foresight may be more extended, can afford no sufficient evidence to decide the question. There are, however, some prophetic intimations of the Heathen oracles, and some of their predictions, which seem to have been directly or indirectly borrowed from a sacred source. There are also some declarations which may be thought to have been dictated by more than human sagacity, and which were of a nature manifestly calculated to do mischief, particularly as directing men to the abominable rites of idolatry. Evil spirits are represented in Scripture, to have gone forth to suggest falsehood *, and as they

* 1 Kings xxii. 23.

certainly were allowed before and during the time of our Saviour's abode on earth to take possession of the persons of men, it does not appear unreasonable to believe, that they might have been constrained sometimes to utter truth, and at other times permitted to increase the delusion of those who gave themselves up to a lying spirit of divination, and who might thus be confirmed in their infatuation by a judicial subjection to such mischievous delusions.

The Pythian oracle is related to have told the agents of Cræsus in what manner the monarch was employed in Lydia at the time in which the oracle delivered its answer; nor does this circumstance imply any powers beyond what may occasionally be ascribed to spiritual beings. The equivocal declaration which was uttered at the same time, and which informed him, that if he attacked the Persians he would overthrow a mighty empire, demonstrates the evil, and limited nature of the agency which was employed; the communication serving but to urge on Cræsus to his ruin; while at the same time the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Cyrus was receiving its exact and literal ac-

complishment to the most beneficial purposes *.

Porphyry speaks of an oracle of Apollo, which is cited also by Justin, in which the Deity is represented to say, that the Egyptians, the Phœnicians, the Chaldæans, and the Hebrews, were the discoverers of the way, and that the Chaldæans alone had attained wisdom, and the Hebrews who worshipped the self-existing God in purity †.

There are two oracles of Hecate, which Eusebius has transcribed from Porphyry, which seem to allude to Christ, the messenger distinguished above all others for piety, who taught the immortality of the soul after death, and who sustained grief, and ascended into the abode of heavenly beings ‡.

It appears that the oracles ceased, not long after the promulgation of Christianity, and that the early Christians believed that they were constrained to silence, by a divine

* Isaiah xlv. 28. xlv. 1—5.

† Justin et Grotius, lib. i. c. 9. Annot.

‡ August. de Civit. lib. xxix. c. 23, et Grot. lib. iv. c. 9. Annot.

power, which over-ruled the spirits of darkness *.

Juvenal in his 6th Satire observes, that the Delphic oracles had terminated, and that the human race was condemned to remain in ignorance of the future, he observes that Chaldæan and astrological arts would in consequence be resorted to, with encreased eagerness, and he intimates contemptuously the pretensions of the Jews, who claimed to be considered as the faithful interpreters of the will of heaven †.

* Fontenelle Hist. des Oracles.

† Sat. vi. l. 541, 555. See Plutarch de Oracul. Defect.

CHAP. XXVII.

On the General Belief in a State of future Rewards and Punishments, and the Administration of a final Judgment.

THAT the Jews, in common with all nations entertained a belief in the immortality of the soul, and a state of future rewards and punishments, there can be no doubt.

Eternal remunerations do not indeed appear to have been annexed as express sanctions to the dispensation revealed by Moses, but the temporal promises recorded by him, and confirmed by subsequent prophets, were designed to impart and were often understood to have ultimately in view, a spiritual and eternal retribution.

The Patriarchs who trusted in God were known to have died without having received the completion of what was graciously covenanted; and even Moses himself was not allowed to enter the land which was dis-

closed to his view from the top of Pisgah, when he beheld the valley of Jericho, and the city of the palm-trees unto Zoar*. The very events and circumstances which were described by the Sacred Historians demonstrate, that God (as our Saviour afterwards pointed out) was “not the God of the dead, “but of the living;” and that those who had “died in the faith, not having received the “promises, but having seen them afar off, “and who being persuaded of them, confessed “that they were strangers and pilgrims on “earth,” thereby declared that “they sought “a better, that is, an heavenly country †.”

The language and figures under which the Jews expressed their confidence in the remuneration of a future life, were of a general nature; and where they spoke of Abraham’s bosom and of Paradise, it does not appear that they attempted to define the character of the happiness which they expected to enjoy, in the state thereby represented.

In the allusion to the place of torment, mentioned in our Saviour’s parable, there was a reference probably to the received opinions of the intolerable flames which were

* Deut. xxxiv.

† Hebrews xi.

supposed to burn there. The Rabbinical descriptions divide the Sheol, or place of the dead, into Paradise, and Gehenna.

The Eastern nations in general believed in a future state, and much of the imagery and circumstances which they employed in reference to it was borrowed, by the Greeks and Romans, and was chiefly drawn from Egypt, as the existing hieroglyphics abundantly shew.

Musæus * and Orpheus † recommended expiations and purifications with a view to a future state of rewards and punishments, as do Hesiod and Homer, and the poets in general. Plutarch remarks that the conviction that good men should obtain a recompence after death, was so ancient that he could not ascertain the author of it ‡.

The philosophical writers, who were distinguished among the Greeks and later nations, must have sometimes reasoned from the events of human life, on the probability of ulterior dispensations; they beheld the inequalities which prevailed, bearing little reference to moral character; they saw the

* Plato Repub. lib. ii. p. 364. Edit. Serran.

† Plutarch Vit. Lucul.

‡ Plut. in Consol. ad Apollon. Cicero, &c. Epist. 117.

world made as it were for bold and adventurous men, and considered a great man suffering in adversity as the noblest spectacle which the gods could behold.

Notwithstanding, however, they assented to the general position, that the wicked would seldom be finally happy, and that punishments rarely failed to overtake the guilty, yet they adopted the conviction before mentioned, which prevailed in the time of Homer, and which was strenuously maintained by the Stoics, that their deities, and Jupiter himself, were constrained by the inexorable decrees of fate, and compelled to bow to an imposed necessity, and that, if they administered occasional protection and favour, it was under the restriction of a prescribed Power.

The works of fiction might represent the heroes who were favoured by the gods as being sometimes protected by their interposition ; they might exhibit Ulysses, or his son, guided by Divine Providence, and the suitors of Penelope finally destroyed ; but in real life the event did not always seem to justify the appointments of Providence, and the cause that was unsuccessful, was often

approved by those who were most revered and esteemed *.

If therefore the peremptory law, to which gods and men were compelled to submit, was founded on principles of infinite wisdom, yet that wisdom not being made fully manifest on earth, its present appointments must have been judged with reference to some expected dispensation to take place hereafter.

Such convictions had their influence, though they are not conceived with that clearness, nor expressed with that confidence which has been felt, since revelation has fully explained that this is only a probationary state,—a part of a scheme of which the conclusion is yet to be developed.

They were sufficient, however, to incline both the philosophical and the vulgar eagerly to catch at any intimations of a future life, and to take up any superstitious opinions which prevailed, rather than to live in impatient murmuring against the gods, and to die without hope of an existence in another world.

There are figurative images used by the

* Lucan. Phars. l. i. 128.

Greeks upon the subject of a future state, which were probably received through the Egyptians from the Jews: thus the expression of Job*, שַׁעַר מוֹת †, was the original, probably, from which Homer derived his notion of “the gates of hell.” The expression occurs also in the works of Theocritus, Sophocles, Euripides, Lucretius, and Virgil.

The superstitions entertained by the Greeks and Romans upon this subject, were of a gross and corporeal nature; and even when they were refined by men of elevated minds, and decorated by all the advantage of poetry, they seemed to exhibit scenes in which the same affections and passions as prevail on earth were supposed to continue, and to be gratified with their accustomed objects.

Pluto, the sovereign of the infernal regions, is by some supposed to have been the Egyptian Typhon; and Enceladon is, by Bochart, considered as Akalathon the crooked ‡.

Virgil, in his description of the Tartarean and Elysian regions, has introduced much of popular opinion, and much of mysterious

* Job xxxviii. 17.

† Αἶθω πυλιν.

‡ Isai. xxvii. 1.

allusion with respect to these interesting subjects. He describes the punishments as inflicting chains and stripes, and labour and suffering, which affected the body.

As he discloses the mournful plains, and the lofty walls to which the guilty were condemned, we behold wretches bearing the same wounds which they received on earth. In the vestibule as it were of hell, and on the first threshold, grief and vengeful cares, and fear, and afflicted age, and death and labour and evil passions were to be found; while, in the happy groves in which the virtuous were received, the heroes were still occupied in the games of the Palæstra, and entertained the same love of chariots and arms and of horses which prevailed on earth. Their time was still occupied in contemplating the steeds, which conducted their cars of victory, now feeding idle on the pasture; and their thoughts were employed in recalling to remembrance the actions in which they had served: but little of intellectual pleasure is specified, excepting the recitation of verse. Such were the notions which occupied the minds of men of enlarged views, for they had nothing better to

substitute, and even Socrates, Cicero, and Seneca, rested their hope on the subject upon arguments of very insufficient weight*.

Socrates, though one of the most enlightened of the Heathens, appears in his discourses to have been much embarrassed upon the subject. Epictetus and others mention the happiness of good men after death, but he lived after the promulgation of the Gospel.

Whatever persuasions were entertained with respect to the immortality of the soul, no general expectation seems to have been formed of the resurrection of the body, 'till our Saviour brought this great doctrine to light, and illustrated its possibility by his own appearance in the body on the third day after his crucifixion.

The notion of the Stoics, which looked to the restoration and renewal of all things after the revolution of ages, might be thought to imply a resurrection of human bodies; and Diogenes Laertius states, that Theopompus asserted that the Chaldæan Magi be-

* Chrysost. in 1 Cor. xi. 21. Plato Phæd. Grot. lib. ii. c. 7. Cicero Tuscul. Quæst. Seneca Epist. 66. Epictet. p. 113.

lieved that the Magi would revive again. Phocylides also, a philosophical poet, intimated a hope that, after the dissolution of the human body, the remains of the dead would come to light, and become gods.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of Events subsequent to the Birth of Christ, and the Promulgation of the Gospel, which substantiate the Truth of the Sacred Records.

ULPIAN states that the governors of the Roman provinces had the right of the sword, which implied the authority of punishing malefactors; an authority which was personal and not to be transferred*.

Coponius, who was sent to govern Judæa as a province, after the banishment of Archelaus, was invested by Augustus with the power of life and death†.

It was under these circumstances that Christ, after being betrayed unto the chief priests, and condemned to death, was delivered to the Gentiles, as he had most dis-

* Lib. vi. c. 8. de Officiis Proconsulis.

† Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 8. § 1.

tinctly foretold in the exact order of events, to be crucified by the Roman governor.

Pilate's wife, (who is by some called Claudia Procula), is spoken of by St. Matthew, as being then with her husband, in Judæa, and is stated to have suffered many things in a dream on account of Christ, and to have admonished the governor to have nothing to do with the persecution against him. The governors of provinces under the republic had not often been allowed to take their wives with them to their præfectures. Augustus did not approve that the custom should be established* ; Tiberius however allowed it in some instances. Agrippina accompanied Germanicus into Germany and Asia† ; and Plancina was with Piso, and contributed to inflame the insolence of her husband towards Germanicus‡. A motion was afterwards made in the senate by Severus Cæcina, to prohibit the indulgence, as attended with inconveniences, but it was rejected§. These statements tend to demon-

* Suet. August. l. ii. c. 24.

† Tacitus Ann. lib. ii. c. 55. lib. i. c. 40, 41. lib. ii. c. 54.

‡ Ibid. l. i. c. 40.

§ Ibid. l. iii. c. 33, 34.

strate the accuracy of the Evangelists, whose books even Julian allowed to be authentic *.

The Heathen accounts are often valuable, as tending to illustrate characters spoken of in Sacred History, whether those employed in the promulgation of the Gospel, or others incidentally mentioned: thus the reports concerning the primitive Christians made by Pliny, Julian, and other writers, reflect a lustre on the cause of religion; while the descriptions given by prophane authors, with respect to the conduct of the governors of Judæa, and of other persons mentioned in the Evangelical History, confirm the fidelity of its statements. Instances of these will be adduced particularly in the chapters concerning Josephus and Tacitus.

Circumstances of chronology and of local detail, casually adverted to, by the Sacred Writers, and which implicate the credibility of their relations, are remarkably corroborated by prophane authors.

Traditionary notions of a star which should indicate the appearance of the Messiah, founded possibly on the prophecies of Balaam, seem to have extended to the Hea-

* Cyril, l. x.

thens, and probably disposed the Romans to attach great importance to the comet which appeared soon after the death of Julius Cæsar, and which was understood to intimate the reception of Cæsar among the gods*. Augustus, who seemed to accede to the popular persuasion, secretly indulged the assurance that the comet was displayed for his sake, rejoicing that he was born under its influence, “and truly,” says Pliny, “that comet was salutary †;” referring it should seem to the happiness of the age of Augustus.

Jewish and Pagan writers equally attest that Jesus lived in the time of Tiberius, and that he was crucified; and indeed there is not any question of the reality of these events.

The Jews also confess in their talmudical books, that Jesus performed miracles ‡; and neither Celsus or Porphyry appear to have denied that he did so §.

The Heathens also, while they bear testimony to the ascendancy of the powers of darkness, before the promulgation of the

* Sueton. Jul. Cæsar, sect. 88. Dio Cass. lib. xlv. p. 273. Edit. Han. 1606.

† Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. ii. c. 23.

‡ In tit. Aben. Zara.

§ Origen, Cont. Cels. lib. ii.

Gospel, and to the cessation of oracles and magical arts when Christianity was established, demonstrate the opposition which subsisted between the kingdom of Christ, and that of Satan. The miracles which Vespasian pretended to perform have been before referred to, and will hereafter be considered: these and others were concerted probably in imitation of those of Christ and his disciples.

There is a strange and extravagant story, related by Philostratus, of Apollonius Tyaneus having raised a young woman from the dead, and of his having vanished from the presence of the emperor, which is so devoid of all probability and authority as not to have any claim to regard.

The miraculous darkness which took place at the crucifixion was not confined to Judæa*. Phlegon, the freedman of the emperor Adrian, speaks of an unprecedented eclipse of the sun, which took place in the reign of Tiberius; the day, at the sixth hour, being turned into dark night, so that the stars were seen; and he states that an earthquake at Nicæa, in

* Luke xxiii. 44.

Bithynia, subverted many buildings *. Porphyry admits that prodigies took place at the sepulchre of Christ †. Phlegon speaks also of the miracles of St. Peter, or as some conceive of Christ, imagining that the name of Peter was substituted for that of our Lord.

It may be observed farther, that the Romans were accustomed to execute their criminals without the city. Plutarch alludes to the circumstance of malefactors carrying their cross ‡. Ulpian states, in his Treatise on the duties of a Proconsul, that the bodies of those condemned to death were not to be refused to their relations, and Augustus had respected the custom §. Josephus represents it as a strong proof of the depravity of the Jews in his time, that they threw out men unburied, though their countrymen had before shewn such regard to the rites of sepulture, as to take down for interment those who were crucified by a legal sentence ||. It was indeed agreeably to the directions

* Euseb. Chron. Orig. in Matt. xxvii. 45. et Adv. Cels. 11. Cyril. cont. Jul. lib. x. et Hieron. cont. Vigil.

† See also Petron. Arbit. Sat. c. lxxi. Cicero in Verrem, lib. v. c. 66. n. 169.

‡ Συμπερι, lib. iv. c. 2. p. 554. Edit. Par. 1624,

§ Lib. i. de Cadav. et lib. iii.

|| De Bell. Jud. lib. iv. § 2.

of the Roman and Jewish law, that the body of Christ was given up to be buried.

An hundred pound weight of spices has been thought a large quantity to be bought for the embalming of the body of our Lord ; but the dead body was sometimes laid, where a respect was intended, “ in a bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices,” as was that of Asa *, and the soldiers at Herod’s funeral were followed by five hundred slaves and freedmen bearing sweet spices †.

St. Paul, writing to Titus, who had been left in Crete to set things in order and to ordain elders, complains of many disorderly men there, who were deceivers and taught false doctrines for the sake of gain ; and he refers to one of their own prophets or poets, who described the Cretans under a representation similar to what his observation had found them to deserve. The poet spoken of is generally supposed to have been Epimenides, in whose book, *περὶ χρησμῶν*, the verse cited by St. Paul appears to be ‡ ; by others,

* 2 Chron. xvi. 14.

† Joseph. Antiq. lib. xvii. c. 8. de Bell. Jud. lib. i. c. 33. p. 1043.

‡ Fabri. Bibl. Græc. lib. i. c. vi. § 3.

however, Callimachus is believed to have been alluded to, in whose Hymn to Jove, the Cretans are said “to be always liars.” It appears that, from the time of Homer, the island of Crete was regarded as the scene of fiction; the character of the people seems to have been proverbially bad, and they are but too faithfully characterized by the verse quoted by St. Paul.

The cloak, concerning which St. Paul wrote to Timothy, is by some supposed to have been the Roman penula. He is thought to have worn it as being a citizen of Tarsus, which city, after having been granted immunities by Mark Antony *, had been received into alliance with Rome, and its citizens admitted by Julius Cæsar, after the battle of Pharsalia, to all the privileges of Roman citizenship, and allowed a senate in which the penula was worn; others, however, understand the *φαιλόνην* to mean a roll of parchment, or a bag in which the parchment was carried; and some that it was a dress worn by the antient Christians †.

* Ammianus, lib. v. p. 675.

† Tertull. de Orat. et ad Martyr. See Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ* on 2 Tim. iv. 13.

CHAP. XXIX.

On the Heathen Testimonies which demonstrate the Completion of the Prophecies of our Saviour and his Apostles.

THE predictions of our Blessed Lord, of which the accomplishment is attested by Heathen writers who were contemporary with the first promulgation of Christianity, are those which relate to his own crucifixion, and resurrection on the third day from the grave * ; the conduct and fate of his Apostles † ; the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews ; the calling of the Gentiles ; the offences which should arise against Christianity ; the subversion of the Jewish government ; the demolition of Jerusalem and its Temple ; the dispersion of the Jews, and the rapid and extensive progress of the Gospel.

* Matt. xxvii. 2. 23. Luke ix. 22.

† Matt. xxvi. 21. 31. 34. John xviii. 19. xxi. 21, 52, &c.

The period of the destruction of Jerusalem was pointed out correctly in prophecy: it was foreshewn that it should not be distant, but that the Gospel should first be preached to all nations, (i. e. of the Roman empire,) as it appears to have been by the wide-spread exertions of the Apostles.

The accounts of all the Evangelists were published before this event, excepting that of St. John, who does not mention the prophecies relating to it. St. Matthew's Gospel, which gives them very fully, was written eight years after our Saviour's ascension, and thirty years before the destruction of the city. St. Peter, who died A.D. 70, and other Apostles, were enabled, by the criteria which were furnished, or by prophetic knowledge, to foretel that the event was near at hand *.

Our Saviour foreshewed many circumstances which should immediately precede this great event, predicting that there should be earthquakes †, and famines, and pesti-

* Matt. xxiv. 9. 14. Heb. x. 37. James v. 1. 1 Peter iv. 7. Col. i. 6.

† Luke xxi. 11. Acts ii. 19, 20. compare with Joseph. Procœm Bell. Jud. §. ii. et lib. vi. c. 5. Tacit. Ann. lib. xii. xiv. Hist. lib. v. Sueton. Claud. c. 18. Senec. Nat. Quæst. lib vi. c. 1. Orosius lib. vii. c. 7.

lences, and fearful sights, and great signs from heaven; and Josephus and Tacitus speak of prodigies and portents in a manner which, with every allowance for exaggeration and superstitious fancies, customary upon such occasions, indicates something peculiar.

The circumstances of the siege, and their exact conformity to the prophecies uttered by Moses and successive prophets, and finally detailed with more ample denunciation by Christ, are so well known, and have been so often pointed out, that it is not my intention to produce them here.

In a consideration of the works of Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius, some particulars illustrative of the subject will be adduced, and those who wish for a more full and exact investigation may have recourse to Bishop Newton and other commentators.

The declaration of our Blessed Lord, with respect to the destruction of the city and temple, involved a consideration of the demolition of the Jewish institutions, and the establishment of Christianity in their stead, while the dispersion of the Jews was intended to distribute every where the living witnesses of the truth of prophecy, unwilling and un-

suspected advocates for a cause which they themselves blindly resisted.

The removal of the Jews into captivity in Assyria, where they remained seventy years, and into Egypt, whither they were brought again and “sold for bond-men and bond-women*,” events foretold in prophecy, had only tended to confirm them in adherence to their distinctive rites and customs.

But the remainder of the scroll of prophecy, unsealed by our Lord and his Disciples, foreshewed the departure of the Mosaic dispensation, leaving only the memorial of its figures, the testimony of its prophecies, and the moral force of its commandments; and it disclosed to the world the successive periods of the Christian Church till the full display of its triumph, the final consummation of its glory.

In the prophecies, which relate to the dispersion of the Jews, it was foretold that they should be “plucked from off their own land†,” and remain in captivity till their final re-assembling; and the testimony of many Heathen writers might be adduced to

* Deut. xxviii. 68. and Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. 1, 2. et Bell. Jud. lib. vi. c. 9.

† Deut. xxviii. 63, 64.

prove how ineffectual all endeavours have been to counteract the fulfilment of these prophecies.

That the Jews were often disposed to return, and that they still cherish the hope of returning is well known, Adrian found it necessary to oppose the disposition, by forbidding them, on pain of death, again to settle in Jerusalem, and it appears that few if any were able to effect it. Benjamin Tudela relates in the twelfth century, that the city was almost totally abandoned by the Jews, and that he could not find in it above two hundred persons of that nation.

It was however disclosed in distinct terms, that, though the people should be dispersed “from one end of the earth to the other,” they should not be utterly destroyed, yet that “they should find no ease or rest, being “oppressed or spoiled,” and that “they “should be mad for the sight of their eyes, “which they should behold, and become an “astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, “their plagues being wonderful and of long “continuance *.”

* Deut. xxviii. and xxxi. 17.

It will be seen then that the Heathen historians afford an exact commentary on these ever memorable prophecies. More abundant testimonies to their accomplishment might be derived from the writings of the fathers and ecclesiastical historians, but it is wished in this work to deduce evidence from writers only who were not converted to Christianity, and whose bias was against its claims; as if turning for a moment, in contemplating the stupendous scene of the crucifixion, to notice the centurion, and them that were with him, who bore likewise their suffrage to Christ, “saying, truly this was the son of “ of God.”

The prophecies of our Lord, with regard to the dispersion, sufferings, and death of his disciples * and followers, and those with relation to the rapid rise, progress, and establishment of Christianity, and to the opposition, offences, and resistance from evil men which it should experience, might be easily shewn from Heathen writers to have received in many instances an exact completion, but this would lead us beyond the line proposed in this work.

* See also Acts xi. 27. xxi. 11. ii. 9.

The predictions also of the Apostles and Evangelists, which describe the Antichristian powers, and the first measures of their enmity, might be illustrated by similar testimonies ; but this detail does not fall within the scope proposed ; and where modern history and experience should be brought into consideration to do any justice to the subject, it would be useless, if not injurious, to exhibit any representations necessarily incomplete and defective.

CHAP. XXX.

Philo.

PHILO, who is stiled Judæus, that he may be distinguished from Philo the Carpathian, who lived in the fourth century, was born before the appearance of Christ, some writers contend even twenty or thirty years before that era, and he must have survived the period of the crucifixion a considerable time*. He is generally regarded as a Jew of Alexandria; he states himself, however, to have been born at Jerusalem †, and he appears occasionally to have repaired to that city to perform sacrifices in the temple. He was a man of distinguished family ‡, and of great authority § at Alexandria, being brother to Alexander Lysi-

* Mangey Præf. ad Phil. Opera.

† De Virtut. vol. ii. p. 587.

‡ Euseb. H. E. lib. ii. c. 4.

§ Hieron. de Vir. Illust.

machus *, who was Alibarch †, or chief of the Fiscal Scribes. He enjoyed great opulence in that city, exercising an office which is supposed to have had the direction of the territorial revenue, or of the profits derived from the cattle, and which was probably a situation of considerable rank, as his son married Berenice the daughter of Agrippa.

Philo appears to have been of sacerdotal family ‡, to have been brought up a Pharisee, and to have attained extensive and various information; and great knowledge of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which he read probably in the Septuagint version, not having, it is supposed, been acquainted with the Hebrew §, being an Hellenist, and writing himself in the Greek language.

He was a man of very eminent qualities, and highly revered; and a remark of his wife, which is recorded, bears testimony to his worth, since, on being enquired of, wherefore she did not wear ornaments, she answered, that the virtue of an husband was a sufficient ornament for a wife. Mangey,

* Acts iv. 6.

† Joseph. lib. xviii. c. 7. lib. xix. c. 5. Cicero Epist. ad Atticum, L. 2. 17. Valesius ad Euseb. H. E. lib. ii. c. 5.

‡ Euseb. Eccles. Histor. lib. ii. C. 4. Phot. Cod. 105.

§ Scaliger. not. in Euseb. Chron. P. 57.

the learned editor of Philo's works, agreeably to the opinion of Basnage, supposes Philo to have been born A. U. 723, thirty years before Christ*. He was deputed by the Jews of Alexandria upon an embassy to Rome, in the fourth year of Caligula, A. U. C. 793, A. D. 41 or 42. The object was to counteract the calumnies of Apion, and to make a complaint to Caligula on the subject of a persecution excited by Flaccus the Roman president, and others, against these Jews, for having refused divine honours to the statues of the Emperors, while the rest of the world was submitting with servile flattery to the adoration of a weak and depraved mortal as a God.

Philo, who appears to have been animated with a generous love of freedom and hatred of tyranny, describes his reception by the Emperor at a villa, which had belonged to Mecænas, near to Rome. He was treated with a contemptuous levity, equally unbecoming the imperial dignity, and the venerable character of Philo†. He however manifested his firmness, and upon the failure of his petition, turned to the Jews, who accompanied him, and encouraged them by say-

* Mangey Præf. and Basnage, lib. iv. c. 21.

† Philo Legat, ad Caium, c. 9. 18. P. 1043.

ing, “ that indeed Caius was in words, enraged against them, but in reality he only “ made God his enemy *.”

Eusebius and Jerom state, that, during Philo’s stay at Rome, he conversed with St. Peter †; and some have affirmed that he was converted to Christianity, either by that Apostle, or by reading the Gospel of St. Mark at Alexandria, and that he afterwards renounced the Christian faith.

These accounts have been disputed by the learned editor of the works of Philo, and it has been maintained that it is not probable that St. Peter was at Rome so early as Philo’s time, if at all; since the Apostle remained at Jerusalem till the death of Herod Agrippa, and afterwards staid some time at Antioch: and that St. Mark’s Gospel was not published till A. D. 45, or as some assert till A. D. 64 ‡.

Bryant however contends, that Philo’s age is placed too far back, when it is assigned to the time of Julius Cæsar; that he was a contemporary of the Apostles, and lived so late as the reign of Nero; and that as St.

* Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 9, 10. p. 821. Edit. Hudson.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. c. 17. vol. i. p. 65. Hieron. de Script. Eccles. vol. p. 106.

‡ Ireneæ Hær. lib. iii. c. 1. § 2.

Mark came to Alexandria in 48 or 49, Philo had an opportunity of conversing with the Apostle, and possibly of seeing his Gospel, if we suppose it to have been published in 45.

In the works of Philo, we discover a great devotion to the Old Testament, and he throws much light on the Mosaic writings, though he often follows a vague strain of allegory, particularly in interpreting the history of the creation and of the temptation in Paradise. He does not seem to have considered the serpent as representing or acting under the influence of Satan*. He expected that all nations should be converted to the law of Moses, and that it should be perpetual, conceiving that the promises relating to Christ referred only to a temporal Messiah†; and describing him as “a man,” who, as the oracle foretold, should “go forth commanding armies “and warring, and who should subdue great “and populous nations ‡,” and whose kingdom, by a daily increase, should be raised on high.

It is remarkable, that though Philo appears to have believed in one God, the Fa-

* Allegor. l. 3. p. 110. &c. Circumcis. p. 211.

† De Vit. Mos.

‡ De Præmiis et Pœnis p. 423. de Mundi Opificio. Allegor. lib. ii. Numb. xxiv. 7.

ther and Creator of the world*, he had nevertheless been led to form very just apprehensions, in some respects, of the eternal nature and attributes of the Logos, and to describe him as a real and acting being, “the first-begotten Son †,” “the express image “ of God ‡,” “esteemed the same as God §,” “the great cause of all things,” “by whom “ all things were produced and disposed ||,” the person who “visibly appeared to Abraham, to Jacob, and to Moses in the bush ¶,” the appointed “Mediator and Intercessor “ for the sins of the world **,” “the second “ God, who is the Word of the Supreme “ God ††,” “the Supreme God, by whom a “ ransom and price of redemption of the “ soul may be paid ††.”

* De Vertutib. p. 562. Edit. Mangey.

† De Agricult. vol. i. p. 308. Πρώτογονον υἱον. See also de Somn. vol. i. p. 653. 656.

‡ De Monarch, vol. ii. p. 225. De Mundi Opif. vol. i. p. 6.

§ De Somnis, vol. i. p. 666.

|| De Leg. Alleg. vol. i. p. 121. De Opif. Mundi, vol. i. p. 4. De Plant. Noe. p. 331. De Monarch, l. ii. p. 225.

¶ Allegor. l. iii. p. 120—130. et de Vit. Mos. lib. i. de Sacrif. vol. i. p. 173.

** Quis Rerum. Divin. Hæres. vol. i. p. 501. 532. De Somn. vol. i. p. 653. Frag. vol. ii. p. 625. De Vita Mosis. vol. ii. p. 155.

†† Philo. Frag. vol. ii. p. 625. Τον δεύτερον θεον ὃς ἔστιν ἐκείνου (θεὸς πρῶτος) λόγος.

†† De Confus. Ling. fol. i. p. 418. De Somn. vol. i. p. 331.

Philo speaks also remarkably of the Holy Ghost, and styles him "the all-wise Spirit *," "the divine power which breathed the breath of life into man," "being sent from the blessed nature for abode here, to the advantage of the human race †, that if man be mortal as to the visible, he might at least be rendered immortal as to the invisible part." He represents a prophet also as "not manifesting any thing of his own, but as being an interpreter (another dictating what he brings forward) during the time that he is under enthusiasm," "being himself in ignorance, his reasoning faculties receding and withdrawing from the citadel of his mind, and the Divine Spirit coming upon and dwelling in him, impelling and directing the organism of his voice to a distinct manifestation of what the Spirit predicts ‡."

These passages indicate clearly a sense of the personal attributes of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and describe each of them in a manner which the Sacred Writers sanc-

* De Gigant. Vol. i. p. 266. l. 2.

† De Mundi Opificio, Vol. i. p. 32. De Special. Leg. p. 343. De Mandato, p. 356.

‡ Gen. i. 26. xlviii. 16. Psalm xxxiii. 6. cv. 19. cvii. 20. cxix. 89. Prov. viii. 22. Isa. ix. 6. Nehem. ix. 20.

tion, and the Apocryphal Writers imitate*. It was probably from these sources, indeed, that Philo drew his opinions.

In a very remarkable passage we find an application of a prophetic title of the Messiah deduced from Jeremiah† to the Logos, “I have heard,” says he, “truly one of the assistants (ἐταίρων) of Moses uttering such an oracle: Behold a man, whose name is the East, a very new appellation if it be understood of what consists of (mere) body and soul; but if it be said of that incorporeal person bearing the divine image, it must be confessed, that the name of ‘the East’ is most appositely ascribed to him; for the Father of all things wished his most ancient Son to arise, whom elsewhere he declared his first born, and who, being begotten, imitating his Father’s ways, and looking to his archetypal examples, framed forms ‡.”

Philo, however, though he thus applies di-

* Judith xiii. 17. xvi. 17. Wisd. ix. 4.—17. xvi. 12. xviii. 15. Eccles. xxiv. 5.—7. li. 14.

† See Jeremiah xxiii. 5. Zach. iii. 8. vi. 12. See also, Luke i. 8. and Tacitus Hist. lib. v. cap. 13. where the Hebrew word ענף (branch) is translated in the Septuagint, “oriens.”

‡ De confus. Ling. vol. i. p. 414.

vine attributes to the different persons of the Godhead, does not state an association and equality in the mysterious union, but distinctly observes, that the Scripture says he made man in the likeness of God, and not in his own likeness, and that this was correctly and wisely proclaimed, for that nothing mortal could be framed in the image of that highest God, the Father of the Universe, but it might be (in the image of) that second God, who is his word *: still, however, notwithstanding these vague and varying notions, Philo must be allowed to have caught, either from the Scriptures or from Plato, some outline of the doctrine of the Trinity, asserting the essential divinity of each person, while, with respect to the Son in particular, he attributes to him also a human character; and he appears in one instance, if the present reading of the passage be adhered to, to represent the Logos as “being man as to his image †;” and as “the shepherd of the holy flock ‡.”

The observations, however, expressed by

* Fragmenta Philonis. vol. II. p. 625. Edit. Mangey et Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. 7. c. 13.

† ‘Ο καὶ ἰκονα ἀνθρώπου, De Confus. Ling. vol. i. p. 427, line 6. Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. xi. c. 15, p. 533, as cited by Bryant. See the sentiments of Philo Judæus, p. 102.

‡ De Agricult. vol. i. p. 308.

Philo upon these and other points of faith, and particularly upon Regeneration and the Divine Grace*, so much resemble what is communicated by St. Luke and St. James, and by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews†, that we may suppose them to have been borrowed from the inspired writings, if we admit that these Scriptures were produced sufficiently easy for that purpose. We have observed, indeed, that Philo might have seen the Gospel of St. Mark; if he had not any intercourse with the early disciples, he might at least have caught the distant reports of those preachers, whose sound went forth with rapid communication into all lands. On the other hand, it is attended with difficulties to suppose that the testimonies to the word of Christ should have been expressly presented to Philo, and not have been noticed by him. Many, who like him

* Leg. Allegor. vol. i. p. 114. See also p. 379.

† Compare Leg. Allegor. lib. iii. p. 127. with Heb. vi. 13. See also de Alleg. p. 93. 114. De Ebrietate, p. 379. De Agricult. vol. i. p. 301, with Heb. v. 13, 14. De Decem Oraculis. vol. ii. p. 201. with 1 John iv. 20. in Flaccum, p. 542. with 1 Cor. xv. 31; and Fragm. in Johan. Damas. p. 649. with 1 John ii. 15. See also de Abraham, vol. ii. p. 33. l. 49. p. 3. l. 46. p. 411. l. 36. p. 463, last line with Acts vii. 4. and Bryant, and Mangey, Præfat.

imagined that the divine perfections could not be united to the flesh, maintained, as did the Nicolaitans*, and afterwards the Gnostics and Valentinians, that the body of Christ was a heavenly substance, which assumed merely the appearance of the human form; it is probable therefore, that Philo either did not hear, or was withholden by his belief in the perpetuity of the Mosaic dispensation, from receiving the witness of the Evangelists, if brought before him. He was employed, however, by Providence, indirectly to support the cause of Religion, and to bear his suffrage to many doctrines communicated in the Gospel: thus, for instance, he gives a remarkable account of Pilate the Roman governor, being apprehensive that the Jews should send an embassy to Rome to represent the crimes of his corrupt government, and the murder of innocent persons who had been condemned by him†. Philo, agreeably to the account of the Evangelists, describes Pilate as putting

* Revel. ii. 6—15. Tertul. de Præscript. Hæret. Irenæus, lib. iii. c. 11. p. 218. lib. i. c. 23. lib. iii. p. 288. Epiph. vol. i. lib. i. p. 70. 74. 91. 171, as cited by Bryant. See Sentiments of Philo, c. 6.

† Philo Legat. ad Caium, 1034.

justice to sale, and as shedding innocent blood *.

It may be worth notice also, that Philo, in relating the circumstances of derision, contrived by the people of Alexandria, to express their contempt of Herod Agrippa, states that, as the Tetrarch was proceeding to his government with permission to wear a crown, they seated a distracted creature of the name of Carabas in a conspicuous place in the theatre, and put a paper crown on his head and covered his body with a mat, placing a reed as a sceptre into his hand, with mockery † levelled against Agrippa, in a manner which reminds us of the blasphemous insults put in practice, with every aggravation against our blessed Redeemer.

The attempts which are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles to have been made upon St. Paul's life, will be more readily accounted for, and the danger from which he was delivered be more fully understood, if we consider that the Jews were so blinded by bigotry and a persecuting spirit, that even Philo states it to be proper that all

* De Legat. ad Caium, c. 16.

† Philo in Flacc.

who had a zeal for virtue should have a right to punish without delay, and with their own hands, those who forsook the worship of the true God, not carrying them before a court of judicature, or the council, or any magistrate whatsoever, but indulging the abhorrence of evil and the love of God, in the immediate punishment of those impious wretches ; and from such principles might originate the custom among the Jews of making a vow not to eat and drink until they had killed the object of their religious abhorrence.

The writings of Plato, though they contain many fanciful and mystical comments on Scripture, yet abound with just sentiments eloquently expressed ; they were highly esteemed by the primitive Church. He speaks of God, and of the worship and purity becoming his creatures, and describes the duties of life and the rewards and punishments of sin with great solemnity and effect*. The elevation of his thoughts sometimes swells out his representations beyond a strict and literal accuracy ; his style

* Philo de Monarch, vol. ii. De Mundi Opificio. et Joseph. Antiq. lib. iv. 8.

however is perspicuous and beautiful. He bears, the testimony of an enlarged mind to the truth of revelation, and to the harmony and importance of its communications; and his works illustrate the Providence of God, who at no time left himself without a witness, but employed, in different ages and countries, distinguished persons to diffuse a light around them, which, however defective when compared with the brightness of Gospel Knowledge, served at least to open the minds of men for the reception of preliminary convictions. Philo, by his wisdom and eloquence, attracted much attention at Alexandria; and his writings, which were widely spread, excited doubtless a reverence for the Holy Scriptures among many who were not acquainted with them. They confirm the sacred accounts, and in particular those which relate to the Israelites in Egypt, and the plagues by which that country was harassed. His remarks shew with what peculiar severity the divine punishment operated on Egypt*.

Grotius† thinks that he discovers some

* De Mosc.

† Grotius ad Heb. iv. 12. et Clericus in Epist. Critic. p. 316.

proofs that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews and St. John, had read the works of Philo: some writers, without sufficient authority, supposed that he was the author of the Book of Wisdom *, drawing their conclusion principally from an apparent correspondence between its principles and opinions, and those scattered through the works of Philo. The respect which Philo professes for the Septuagint, and which led him to believe that the translators had been inspired to the production of a perfect conformity with each other, and to an exact correspondence with the original, though extravagant, was not peculiar to himself. The persuasion which very generally prevailed, gave a celebrity to the version, and contributed to render the Old Testament more generally known before the publication of the Gospel. Philo relates that an annual festival was celebrated in the Island of Pharos, and resorted to, not only by the Jews, but by other people, for grateful thanksgivings to God for the blessing †.

* Fabricii. Philo.

† De Mosc. lib. ii. p. 140. De Leget ad Caium.

CHAP. XXXI.

Josephus.

THE character of Josephus, as an historian, is entitled to very particular consideration, and the testimonies which he affords in support of Christianity have an especial claim to regard.

This eminent man appears to have been raised up by Providence for purposes equally remarkable and important. He stands on a distinct ground between Sacred and Heathen writers, and his works afford most valuable illustrations of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, and of the truth of many facts on which the claims of religion rest.

Flavius Josephus was the son of Matthias, of sacerdotal extraction, and of royal descent, on the mother's side, she being of the Asmonean race; he was born at Jerusalem, A. D. 37, and died in 93. He seems to

have been educated in strict adherence to the Mosaic law.

Whiston maintained that he was a Nazarene, or Ebionite Jewish Christian. We shall, however, agreeably to the common opinion, consider him only as a believer in the Divine authority of Moses and the prophets.

He appears, indeed, to have entertained some apprehension of the approaching termination of the Jewish dispensation, as he combated the opinions of his countrymen with respect to the necessity of circumcision, maintaining that every man should be left to serve God in his own way, and he seems to have expected the fall of Jerusalem.

Whatever his religious persuasions were, he certainly established a high character by his judgment and attainments, so as to have been consulted at a very early age by those who had the direction of the public affairs.

He obtained also stations of considerable authority, and was employed in many undertakings of great moment and enterprize, in which he displayed much activity and courage. His distinguished talents enabled him to record his own actions, and to trans-

mit the memorial of them, with that of the history of his country, to after ages.

He went to Rome in the 26th year of his age, A. D. 68, and having been introduced by Aliturus, an Hebrew comedian to Poppæa, the empress, he experienced much favour from her. On his return to his country, he was appointed to the command of some forces in Galilee, and distinguished himself in the defence of Jotapata against Vespasian and Titus. When the place was reduced, he was not only pardoned at the intercession of Titus, but received into much confidence and favour with Vespasian. He appears, indeed, to have deluded himself into a belief, or to have artfully persuaded Vespasian that he was authorized by a Divine commission, to assure him that he should fulfil the Jewish prophecies, and succeed to the Empire*. Josephus was taken by Vespasian to the siege of Jerusalem, whence after beholding the accomplishment of the ever memorable predictions of Christ in the siege and destruction of the city, he accompanied Titus to Rome, and obtained the privileges of a Roman citizen, with an

* De Bell. Jud. lib. iv. (5) c. 10. p. 1205. Edit. Hudson.

allowance from Vespasian, which he enjoyed many years, employing his time in the study of the Greek language and in the composition of his works.

The productions of Josephus consist of the Jewish Antiquities, the War of the Jews, his own Life, and two books against Apion. The authenticity of the principal works though assailed by Harduin, is fully established. Some smaller pieces are ascribed to him, particularly a work entitled the "Maccabees," or a Discourse on the "Eclipse of Reason," in which is related the martyrdom of Eleazer, and of a woman and her seven sons for refusing to abjure their faith. It has been doubted whether this, be the work of Josephus, and though the history is related with solemnity as real, and is assigned to the time of Antiochus, it seems to be considered by Grotius as a fiction, or as embellished at least with many fictitious circumstances*.

Josephus wrote his history of the Jewish war at the command of Vespasian. Some think that it was first composed in Hebrew; and Hebrew manuscripts either of this

* Grot. ad Luke xvi. 19.

original, or of a subsequent version are occasionally mentioned, in particular one which was in the Vatican. The history which was finished about A. D. 76. was presented to Vespasian in the Greek language *, and the Emperor with his own hand wrote an order for its being published. It afterwards obtained the approbation of Julius Archelaus †, a distinguished Jew, of Herod, and of King Agrippa ‡. It was deposited in the public library at Rome, and a statue was erected in honour of the author §. The work must have attracted great attention at Rome, at the time when the Jewish nation was brought greatly into notice by their obstinate rebellion, and by the distinguished victories and triumph of Vespasian and Titus: to whose honour an arch was erected at Rome, on which are still to be seen the sculptured representations of the vessels and ornaments of the temple of Jerusalem. The golden table, and the candle-

* See Willes's First Discourse prefixed to L'Estrange's Translation of Josephus; and Ant. lib. x. c. 10. p. 458.

† Fabricius de Joseph.

‡ Cont. Apion, lib. i. § 9. et de Vit. Joseph.

§ Euseb. H. E. lib. iii. c. 9.

stick with the seven branches, were deposited in the temple of Peace, built with great splendour by Vespasian upon the occasion, and the sacred book of the law, and the purple veils of the sanctuary, in the palace of the Emperor*. The History of Josephus is greatly to be admired for the striking and animated manner in which the author describes the affecting scenes which he beheld.

The Jewish Antiquities, which extend to twenty-books, bring down the history of the Jews from the beginning of the world to the twelfth year of the reign of Nero, when they rebelled against the Romans.

This work was finished in the thirteenth year of Domitian, A. D. 93. It is almost a transcript of the Sacred History, written with the latitude of a paraphrase. The author introduces dates, with more attention to chronology than is usual in ancient writers, but still, with less accuracy than might be wished, as they do not correspond with the chronology of the Hebrew text; or with that of the Septuagint version, from the latter of

* De Bell. Jud. lib. vii. c. 5. p. 1307.

which he appears frequently to derive his information.

It is possible, however, that the copies may have been mutilated, since they differ from each other in many points, as well as in chronology, and vary also from the accounts of other writers *.

The history of his own life, which seems originally to have been annexed to the Antiquities, is continued down to the reign of Domitian, who distinguished him for some time by his favour.

His two books against Apion were written after his Antiquities. Apion was a grammarian of Alexandria, who entertained great prejudices against the Jews, and made many misrepresentations concerning them, which were refuted by Josephus, who has preserved in his work, some interesting fragments of ancient historians, which repeat or confirm many accounts of Scripture. How many years Josephus lived after completing this work is not exactly known. It has been conjectured that he did not long survive his patron Epaphroditus, who was put to death

* Spanheim de Chronol. Sacr. p. ii. c. 2. et Fabricius in Joseph.

by Domitian, A. D. 95, after which, it has been suspected that the historian fell a victim to the malice of his enemies *.

Josephus, as an historian, is justly celebrated for his fidelity and correctness. If he admitted some relations of questionable character into his earlier accounts, and even intermixed them with particulars of Sacred History, and also disagreed with other writers, yet, upon an impartial judgment, he is entitled to the highest respect; and Scaliger justly observes that it is more safe to believe him, not only as to the affairs of the Jews, but as to those of foreign nations, than any of the Latin writers; and that sincerity and compass of learning are every where conspicuous.

A great mass of information might be collected from the works of Josephus in confirmation of the evidence of Christianity. The attestation which he gives to the sacred accounts of the Old Testament, is, indeed, so full, that he confirms almost every part; writing with such variation as might naturally be expected from an author who composes a work in his own style,

* Dodwell. Dissert. vi. ad Irenæum.

introducing his own additions and speeches *, but with an evident deference to the sacred writings, demonstrating his deep veneration for, and entire confidence in them. It has been alledged that he suppressed some events and miraculous occurrences in the history of the Jews, that he might not offend the contemptuous prejudices of the Greeks and Romans. In detailing the insidious massacre of the Scechemites, related in Gen. xxxiv. he omits the singular fact, that they had previously submitted to circumcision; and he passes over the circumstances under which Jacob led the flocks of Laban to conceive spotted and speckled cattle, thus qualifying some particulars in accommodation to the opinions and manners of people who differed so much from his countrymen; and he was not himself sufficiently aware of the spiritual import of the Jewish dispensation, and of the figurative application of the prophecies. It is possible, also, that after having witnessed, as it were, the dereliction of the Jewish nation by Providence, he began to concede somewhat to the incredulity of the Heathens around him; since he speaks with some apparent doubt

* Lib. iii. c. 1. § 2. c. 4. § 5. lib. iv. c. 8. Edit. Hudson, 1720, et passim.

as to the origin of circumcision ; and admits, with extravagant latitude, a comparison between the history of the passage through the Red Sea, and that of Alexander over the Pamphylian Sea*. It does not, however, appear that he intended to withhold the proofs of that miraculous economy under which the Jews were governed, in subjection to a theocracy. He distinctly asserts the inspiration of the Scriptures, relates the accomplishment of Jewish prophecies, and produces the miracles which were displayed † in confirmation of the revelations which were imparted. The detail of circumstances which he records every where, demonstrates the support and direction of Providence, manifesting its interposition, and exhibiting the signs of a peculiar protection of the Jews. He mentions the frequent disclosure of the Divine presence; the descent and ministry of angels conversing with the patriarchs and others ; the transmutation of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, which was extant in his time, and which he professes to have seen ‡, the marvellous deliverance of the Israelites

* Antiq. lib. ii. c. 16.

† Ibid. lib. v. c. 1. lib. x. c. 1. 6. 8. 10. &c.

‡ Lib. i. c. 11, p. 28. Clem. ad Corinth. et Irenæus adv. Hæres. lib. iv. c. 51.

from Egypt, and their support in the wilderness, with many subsequent indications of God's especial direction; the kindling of celestial fire on the altar, consuming the sacrifices; the permanent abode of a Divine oracle, or source of illumination from which revelations were obtained by the High Priest, by means of the Urim and Thummim, the operation of which was expected to be restored when the temple was rebuilt in the time of Nehemiah*, and which Josephus represents to have ceased two hundred years before he composed his Antiquities†.

In treating of the declarations of God, which were prophetic, as relating to the Messiah, he sometimes generalizes what is particular, from not apprehending that import of the words which is distinctly seen by those who have the veil of prejudice taken from their hearts. He omits, therefore, or qualifies passages which have a spiritual meaning, and which now contribute to the support of faith; thus in delivering the prophetic declaration of God in the expression of his wrath towards our first parents in

* Nehem. vii. 65. 1 Esd. v. 40. iv. 46. xiv. 41.

† Antiq. lib. iii. c. 8. and Whiston's Note.

Paradise, he drops the intimation with respect to the Messiah, which is the essential part of the promise ; and not being aware, that by the serpent, we are to understand the great enemy of mankind, he interprets the divine threat with regard to the bruising of Satan by the victory of Christ, as importing only that men should direct their strokes against the serpent's head. Writing as a Jew, either ignorant of, or studiously disguising the truth, he omits to mention those parts of the promises communicated to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which conveyed to them the assurance, that " in their seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed *." He may be thought however to have had some notion of the future dominion of the promised seed, as he speaks of Esau's having deprived Jacob of a kingdom to be given him by God †; but he had not, it should seem, any notion that the enjoined sacrifice of Isaac had a typical character.

On a general view of the testimonies afforded by Josephus, they will be found to relate principally to the establishment of

* Comp. Ant. lib. i. c. 10. 13. 19. with Gen. xii. 3. xxii. 18. xxv. 12. xxviii. 14.

† Lib. i. c. 19. § 6. p. 40. *ὡς ἀφηρημένον τῆς παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ βασιλείας.*

facts, as well those which illustrate the completion of prophecy, as those, which tend to verify the reports and accuracy of the evangelical writers. In the particulars which will be adduced from the works of the Jewish historian, we shall not so much insist upon the proofs which are to be found in them, in confirmation of the prophecies of the Old Testament, the accomplishment of which took place, before the time of Christ*, since, as being a Jew, he may be supposed to have had a bias in favour of such prophecies; and it will be seen, that he acknowledged as sacred, all the books of the Old Testament which are received by our Church†. It may be remarked, however, that he bears witness to the completion of the prediction of Daniel, by informing us, that Antiochus Epiphanes spoiled the Temple, and put a stop to the practice of offering up daily sacrifice during three years and six months‡. The accounts which Josephus gives of the external veneration which the Jews entertained for the Mosaic law are very remarkable, and the general

* Antiq. lib. v. c. 1. lib. ix. c. 11—13. lib. xvi. c. 1—6. 8—10. &c.

† Cont. Apion, lib. i. § 8.

‡ De Bell. Jud. lib. i. c. 1.

picture of the corruption of manners which prevailed among them, while it exhibits a striking departure from the principles of the law, is equally deserving of attention, being full of interest from the relation which it bears to the argument for the necessity of the Divine instruction of Christ, and of his intervention as a Mediator.

It is necessary, however, to proceed to a more minute exposition of the evidence deducible from the works of Josephus. The first particular which may be mentioned as demonstrating strongly the advantage to be derived from attention to the writings of this historian is, that he appears to relate with minute and unusual accuracy, and detail of dates, that Nehemiah, by unwearied perseverance, finished the rebuilding of Jerusalem, after three years and four months exertion, in the 28th year of Xerxes, and in the ninth month*. Again, although he seldom adverts to astronomical circumstances, he mentions an eclipse of the moon, which took place a little before the death of Herod the Great. By these chronological notices some most important points relating to the history of Christianity have been ascertained,

* Antiq. lib. xi. c. 5.

as the explication of the seventy weeks of Daniel, the duration of our Saviour's ministry, and the time of his death, in conformity to the prediction of that prophet*.

The historian, in describing Daniel's interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, when he comes to the part which relates to the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which was to break in pieces the iron, the brass, and the clay, the silver and the gold, and which is generally supposed to relate to the kingdom of the Messiah, speaks thus remarkably: "Daniel did also explain
 " the things concerning the stone to the
 " king, but I do not think proper to relate
 " them, since I am only bound to describe
 " things past, or things present, but not
 " things future; yet, if any one be so very
 " anxious of knowing truth, as not to abstain
 " from such points of curiosity, being desirous to enquire as concerning things
 " which are uncertain whether they shall
 " happen, let him be diligent in reading the
 " book of Daniel, which he will find among
 " the sacred writings." Upon this intima-

* Whiston's Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. 5. and xvii. c. 6, and Supplement to the Literal Accomplishment of Prophecy, p. 72.

tion of the belief of Josephus, in a prophecy relating to Christ, Havercamp observes, that it is not to be wondered at, that the historian would not meddle with things future, for he had no mind to provoke the Romans by speaking of the destruction of that city which they called the Eternal City*.

Josephus admits that Daniel wrote concerning the dominion of the Romans, and the desolation of Jerusalem to be effected by them. It should seem that he was induced to apply to Vespasian the prophecies which related to Christ, upon interested motives, since he himself afterwards intimated that the Messiah was yet to come; and he endeavoured to introduce a latitude of opinion upon the subject, by saying that interpretations go by fancy, some one way, some another, and that the Jews in the end came to suffer for their mistakes with irreparable destruction of their country.

The account which Josephus gives of the 22 books of the canon, and of the conviction which the Jews entertained of the Divine authority of these books, is highly important,

* Antiq. lib. x. c. 10. p. 457. Edit. Hud. and note, p. 348. Whiston's Translation.

since he states that none dared to add to, or take from, or in any respect alter them, but that it was implanted in all from their birth, to reverence them as containing the precepts of God, to abide by them, and cheerfully to die for them if necessary *. The circumstantial detail, likewise, which he recites of the translation of the Mosaic law, under Ptolemy Philadelphus, exhibits a proof of the care with which Providence substantiated to Heathen nations the authority of the Pentateuch, securing its distribution in a language generally understood long before the promulgation of the Gospel †.

Josephus sometimes conforms to the chronology of the Hebrew Scriptures, and sometimes to that of the Septuagint, but occasionally differs from both ‡. The learned Hales undertakes, from statements of Josephus, which are supported by Theophilus, to correct the system of ancient chronology upon a rectified era of the creation, B. C. 5811 §. Jo-

* Contra Apion, lib. i. § 8. et Procem. ad Antiq. § 3.

† Antiq. lib. xii. c. 2.

‡ See Willes's Second Discourse upon Josephus.

§ See Hales's New Analysis, vol. i. page 105. Josephus Præfat. Antiq. §. 3.

sephus professes to give a history of five thousand years from Scripture*.

The passages, in which Josephus concurs with the accounts of the Evangelists, are numerous; thus, for instance, his representations, with respect to the demoniacs, confirm the sacred relations, stating them to be persons possessed by the souls of wicked men, which destroy them, if no assistance be obtained†; the description which he gives of the Jewish sects, particularly of the Scribes and Pharisees, corresponds with what is stated of them in the Gospel. He observes, that the Pharisees asserted that God had decreed to put an end to Herod's government; which confirms the account in St. Matthew, that the chief priest and Scribes (many of whom were Pharisees) declared that "it was written in the Prophets, that out of Bethlehem should come a Governor, who should rule over the people Israel."

The dissensions, the incestuous marriages, in violation of the laws of Moses‡, and the other abominable crimes of the family of

* Contra Apion, lib. i. § 1.

† De Bell. lib. vii. c. 6. p. 1308.

‡ Levit. xviii. 6, 7. 9. and Matt. xiv. 3, 4.

Herod, especially their conduct with respect to Christ, and the Baptist, and his disciples, drew down the Divine vengeance, and effected the destruction of their house. The fate of the first Herod was distinguished by the most striking miseries; and his death was characterized by a malignity, that preserved to the last, the same spirit which led him to murder the Innocents at Bethlehem. Josephus states, that not long before he expired, he sent orders through Judea, requiring the presence of all the chief men in Jericho, and he earnestly enjoined his sister Salome and her husband Alexis to enclose the circus, in which they were assembled, with soldiers, and to kill them at his death *. The other accounts with respect to Herod and his successors, accord with the circumstances of their reigns, and characters, incidentally mentioned, or alluded to, by the Evangelists. The historian informs us, that Herod, by his will, appointed Archelaus to succeed him in Judea, with the title of King, and assigned the rest of his dominions to Herod Antipas, as Tetrarch of Galilee, and to Philip, with the exception of a small part given to Salome. The will was

* Lib. xvii. c. 6. p. 769.

ratified in part by Augustus, and Archelaus was appointed ruler over Idumea and Judea, with the title of Ethnarch, that of King being reserved till he should merit it *. He, however, soon assumed the distinction, and Josephus, who admits the restriction imposed, nevertheless calls him “the King who succeeded Herod †.” The historian adds, that Herod Antipas continued Tetrarch of Galilee till removed by Caligula, thus confirming the account of St. Luke ‡, that our Lord was “sent to Herod, who himself “was at Jerusalem at that time,” because “he belonged unto his jurisdiction:” and afterwards attesting the justice of the punishment inflicted upon the man who had dared to “set at nought” the Saviour of the world. Philip, the brother of Herod Antipas, according to Josephus, governed Trachonitis, with Batanea §, (of which St. Luke makes him Tetrarch) together with Auranitis, and other territories, thirty-seven years ||.

St. Matthew relates that Joseph, in returning from Egypt, with Mary and the child Jesus turned aside into the parts of

* Antiq. lib. xvii. c. 8. 13. De Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 4.

† Lib. xviii. c. 8. Matt. ii. 22.

‡ Luke xxiii. 7.

§ Antiq. lib. xvii. c. 13. De Bell. Jud. l. ii. c. 6.

|| See Luke iii. i.

Galilee, when he heard that Archelaus reigned in Judea, by which is implied that Archelaus succeeded his father Herod the Great, that his power did not extend to Galilee, and that the state of his dominions was insecure, or his character odious; it appears from the accounts of Josephus, that soon after his father's death considerable turbulence and discontent were manifested against the memory of the departed king, and that clamours were raised for satisfaction for injuries, so that not long after the accession of Archelaus, his soldiers slew three thousand citizens in an insurrection, and Judea in general was so disturbed and tumultuous, that it naturally occasioned the return of the holy family to Nazareth*.

The historian states, that a difference arose between Aretas, king of Arabia Petræa, and Herod Antipas, the tetrarch, who had married his daughter. On a journey to Rome, Herod making a visit to his brother Herod, surnamed Philip, fell in love with Herodias, Philip's wife, and daughter of their brother Aristobulus, and she acceded to his proposals to her, to live with him, on condition of his †

* Antiq. lib. xvii. c. 9.

† Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 6. § 1. p. 804. Grotius in Matt. xiv. 3.

putting away the daughter of Aretas. This divorce probably occasioned a war; and it may be collected from Josephus, that the soldiers, sent by Herod upon this occasion against Aretas, passed through the country in which St. John preached, at the very time that he was proclaiming the necessity of repentance. It is possible that these were the persons whom he instructed to do no violence to any man, neither to accuse any falsely, and to be content with their wages*.

It is remarkable that Josephus seems to have imbibed the same spirit of instruction, since he describes himself to have given very similar advice to his own soldiers.

He tells us, indeed, that he had been some time with Banus, an Ascetic, whom Hudson conjectures to have been a follower of the Baptist:—Josephus imitated for a time his abstemious life, and seems to have received from him, or some other teacher, a more elevated apprehension of the law than generally prevailed. Hence, perhaps, it was, that though our Saviour states it to have been a popular notion among the Jews to love their neighbours and to hate their enemies, Josephus represents it to be pro-

* Luke iii. 14.

hibited by the Jewish laws to spoil their enemies*.

Herod's army, in his expedition against Aretas, was defeated in consequence of treachery. Josephus states, that some of the Jews attributed his failure "to a divine punishment for what he had done to the Baptist, whom Herod had slain, though John was a good man, who exhorted the Jews to cultivate virtue, and by justice among each other, and piety to God, to approach to baptism; for that thus baptism appeared acceptable to God when they had recourse to it, not for remission of sins, but for the sanctity of body, their minds being previously purified by righteousness."

The historian adds, that when others were converted to John, since "for the most part they were pleased with hearing his discourse, Herod, being afraid lest John should avail himself of the confidence which men reposed in him to excite sedition (for they appeared disposed to follow his counsel in every thing), thought it most expedient to seize and put him to

* See his Life, § 26. See also § 23.

“ death * before any thing more new should
 “ arise from him, rather than to expose
 “ himself to a late repentance after he
 “ should be brought into difficulties by any
 “ change that might be effected *.” John
 therefore, on account of the suspicion of
 Herod, was sent bound to the castle of Ma-
 chærus, and there was put to death. The
 Jews however thought, that the army of
 Herod was destroyed in consequence of the
 displeasure of God, avenging the death of
 John. The historian does not mention He-
 rodias as the instigator upon this occasion ;
 he, however, elsewhere informs us, that she
 had a daughter by a former marriage, called
 Salome, who is generally supposed to have
 been the person that danced before Herod,
 and who, to make sure of his execution of her
 mother’s purpose, demanded and obtained the
 head of John. The historian also represents
 Herodias as a woman who, by her envy and
 ambition, occasioned the deposition and ba-
 nishment of her husband Herod Antipas.

Josephus states, that Coponius was sent

* The words of Josephus are remarkable, and may be
 thought to have some reference to the approach of the
 change to be affected by the Advent of our Saviour : *πρίν
 τινεώτερον ἐξ αὐτῆ γενέσθαι.* Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 6. § 2. p. 805.

into Judea to govern it as a Roman province *, with the power of life and death ; and at the same time Cyrenius, a Roman senator of consular dignity, was appointed to be a judge in Syria, to tax the inhabitants, and to confiscate the substance of Archelaus. This is supposed by Prideaux † to have taken place at the very period that Christ made his appearance in the temple at the age of twelve years. We shall hereafter have occasion to remark, that Cyrenius had been previously sent as an assessor into Judea by Augustus, who, being displeased with Herod, wished to mortify him by this mark of subjection ‡, and an enrolment had in consequence commenced agreeably to the statement of St. Luke §. The appointment of a Roman governor, invested with the power || of life and death, clearly indicates the departure of civil authority : and hence the chief priests declared before Pilate, that the Jews had no king but Cæsar. Some writers assign to this period the accomplish-

* Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 1. et de Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 8.

† Connect. Part ii. Book ix. p. 512.

‡ Antiq. lib. xvii. c. 15, p. 789. lib. xviii. c. 1. De Bell. Jud.

§ Luke ii. 2.

|| John xviii. 31. xix, 10. Tacitus Annal, lib. ii. c. 42. Lardner, Part i. Book i. c. 2. Edit. Kippis.

ment of the prophecy, which foretold the departure of the sceptre from Judah ; that tribe being put for the whole nation, of which, after the captivity, it formed the greater part. Others conceive that the sceptre departed from Judah thirty-seven years before, at the accession of Herod the Great to the throne, who was not a Jew by descent from Abraham, his family being originally from Ascalon. It may be replied, however, that Herod, although he was not a Jew by family descent, yet was one by birth * ; so that the sceptre may be strictly said not to have departed from Judah, that is, from one of the Jewish nation, until the arrival of Coponius the Roman governor. After that period, the high priest, in conjunction with the Sanhedrim, or chief council of the Jews, exercised some judicial power only ; and they continued to possess this shadow of authority, until the whole Jewish polity was dissolved in the destruction of Jerusalem.

Julian evidently considers the government as passed away from the time that the Romans established their power over Judea, as a tributary province ; but he places this event under the reign of Herod, from an erroneous

* Basnage.

opinion of the nature of the census made by order of Augustus. Hence he groundlessly states as an objection to the Christians, that Jesus, whom they proclaimed, was one of Cæsar's subjects *.

It has been supposed, that the census, which was decreed by Augustus to mortify Herod, was suspended on the reconciliation of the emperor to him, and was afterwards enforced when Archelaus was deposed on the complaint of the Jews, who requested that Judea might be rendered a province.

Josephus, in treating of the very period to which the prophecy of Jacob† seems to point, relates some proofs of that controul over the spiritual and civil power of Judah, which was exercised by the Romans; particularly when Pilate, who had exasperated the Jews by endeavouring to introduce the standards of the legions crowned with images into the city, had drawn his army out of Samaria, and employed it to support the violation of the Jewish laws, by enforcing a payment out of the holy treasury to defray the expences of an aqueduct, which he had brought to Jeru-

* Apud Cyril, lib. vi. p. 213. Edit. Spanh.

† Gen. xlix. 10.

salem. Some of those persons who resisted his command, were killed in a tumult excited upon the occasion.

Some have supposed, that these were possibly the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices *. The severe treatment of these subjects of Herod had possibly produced the enmity between him and Pilate, which was done away by Pilate's sending Jesus to Herod †. Thus were the measures, which subjected Christ to mockery, rendered subservient to the promotion of reconciliation between those who sat in judgment against him. It is deserving of notice, that St. Luke mentions Pilate's being at Jerusalem at that time, and Josephus alludes to the practice of Herod in going up to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover ‡.

There appears to be some ground to remark, that Pilate's disposition to favour Christ, which is sufficiently apparent (though in his timid compliance with popular clamour, he consented to give him up to be crucified), might possibly have originated in his wish to countenance any pretension which

* Hist. lib. xviii. c. 3. Luke xiii. 1.

† Luke xxiii. 6—12.

‡ Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 5. § 3. p. 801. c. 6. § 3.

might concur with his object of abolishing the Jewish laws*.

Josephus represents Caiaphas to have succeeded to the high priesthood during the time of Valerius Gratus, who was succeeded soon after in the government of Judea by Pontius Pilate†; and the historian farther states, that Caiaphas was deposed by Vitellius‡; which representations concur with the accounts of the Evangelists who describe Caiaphas and Pilate as contemporaries§ having condemned Jesus.

It may be collected from some parts of Josephus, that the historian, who had been much in Galilee, was well informed of the appearance of our Saviour, and of many circumstances connected with his ministry. There are even some grounds to believe that he entertained a respect for his pretensions, or some hesitation at least in rejecting his claims.

In the 18th book of the Antiquities the following passage occurs: “Now there was
“ about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if we
“ ought to call him a man, for he was a doer
“ of wonderful works, a teacher of such men

* Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 3.

† Ibid. lib. xviii. c. 2, p. 795.

‡ Lib. xviii. c. 5. p. 802.

§ Luke iii. 1, 2.

“ as receive the truth with pleasure. He
 “ drew over to him many of the Jews and
 “ many of the Gentiles ; he was [the] Christ ;
 “ and Pilate, upon the denunciation of the
 “ principal men amongst us, having con-
 “ demned him to the punishment of the
 “ cross, they, that loved him at the first, did
 “ not cease (to love him), for he appeared
 “ unto them alive again the third day ; the
 “ Divine Prophets having spoken these, and
 “ ten thousand other wonderful things con-
 “ cerning him : and the tribe of Christians
 “ so named from him, have continued until
 “ this time *.”

There appears to have been a strong dis-
 position in some writers, since the revival of
 literature, to consider this passage as spurious,
 though Fabricius represents it to have been
 in all the Greek and Latin editions and
 manuscripts, which Bosius Bigotius, and
 Lambecius, examined ; in a very ancient
 Hebrew version in the Vatican, but after-
 wards erased, as it was said, by the Jews ;
 and in two manuscripts of an Hebrew ver-
 sion, spoken of by Robert Canute in the 12th
 century †.

* Lib. xviii. c. 4. § 3. p. 798. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. i.
 c. 11. Hieron.

† Baron. An. Christi 34. Num. 226.

Doubts concerning the authenticity of this passage seem first to have been suggested by Gifanius and Osiander in the sixteenth century; others have since confidently rejected it *. It has been objected to it that it is not cited by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, or Photius, even when some of these writers argue against the Jews; but we are to consider that some of these writers profess to derive their arguments only from Scripture, and the testimony itself was of less importance in early times than it may now be deemed †; it seems to be cited in a discourse (which some consider as genuine) addressed to Dioclesian by Macarius ‡, who held an office of distinction in that emperor's court; it is quoted by Eusebius and St. Jerome, and in the most express manner; by Sozomen, Hegesippus, and others §.

It has, however, been farther urged, that

* Daubuz de Test. Joseph. ap Joseph. vol. ii. Edit. Haver. p. 203.

† Cave, Hist. Literar. A. D. 67. Huet. Demons. Evang. prop. iii. sect. 13.

‡ Act. Sanct. Maii. tom. v. 149.

§ Isidor. Pelus. iv. Epist. 22. lib. iii. c. 2. sect. 13. vol. v. Sozom. Hist. lib. i. c. 1. and Hieron. Catal. Scrip. Eccles. c. 13. Fabricii, Bibl. Græc. lib. 416. Joseph. Testim. vol. iv. Ambrose vel Hegisip. de Excid. Urb. Hieros. lib. ii. c. 12.

the passage speaks in such clear terms of Christ, and with such apparent acknowledgment of some of his claims, that if it were genuine the author must have been a believer in the Divine authority of the Gospel, since it seems to admit that Jesus was Christ or the Messiah, and attests his resurrection on the third day from the grave, in agreement with the predictions of the prophets. But in answer to this it may be observed, that nothing is asserted but what was generally known; nor considering how generally the copies of Josephus were dispersed, could the passage have been interpolated; that Josephus could not omit all mention of Christ, without convicting himself of a manifest suppression of facts, while he professes to have nothing so much at heart as not to omit any thing of consequence*; and that, regarding the passage as genuine, the historian may perhaps be understood to relate the account only as it was currently received, without intending to substantiate it, or allowing our Saviour to be the Messiah in the Christian construction of the word †, but only to be the person known under that designation ‡.

* *Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 1.*

† *Whiston's Dissert. 1. on text of Josephus, § 3. 7. 8.*

‡ *Tacitus Annal, lib. xv. c. 44. Plin. lib. x. Epist. 97.*

Jerome cites a passage as referring to him who was believed to be the Christ *. The expressions which have been critically examined have been found strictly to accord with the style of Josephus †. Origen mentions a passage in Josephus, in which the historian spoke of Christ's discourse with the doctors in the Temple, but the passage is not to be found in the works which are extant ‡. The Jews accused the Christians of interpolating, and the Christians reproached the Jews for erasing, testimonies to their cause. Suidas speaks of a passage in his History of the Destruction of Jerusalem, in which mention was made of Jesus officiating in the Temple with the priests §, but the passage is not now to be found.

The character and authority attributed by Josephus to Herod Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus, accords with the accounts given of him by St. Luke, with relation to St. Peter. The statement also of his death, as related by the Evangelists ||, is confirmed by

* De Viris Illust.

† Willes's 1st Discourse, p. 8.

‡ Cont. Celso. lib. i. p. 33. lib. ii. p. 69.

§ Suidas in voce Jesus, p. 1228. See also Luke iv. 16—18.

|| See Lardner, Part i. b. i. c. 2. p. 20. Acts xii. 20—23.

Josephus, who informs us, that he exhibited spectacles in honour of Cæsar on an appointed festival at Cesarea, formerly called Straton's Tower, at which great numbers of persons of distinction and rank were assembled. On the second day he put on a dress of a rich and curious texture, when the silver of the garment reflecting the beams of the sun, shone out with great splendour, so as to excite extraordinary admiration; and the Jews cried out that he was a god, exclaiming "be thou merciful to us, for though we
 " have hitherto received thee as a man, yet
 " shall we henceforth own thee as superior
 " to mortal nature." Upon this he neither rebuked them, nor rejected their flattery*; but as he presently looked up he beheld an owl sitting on a cord over his head, and immediately understood that the bird foreboded some evil tidings, it having been predicted to him by a German, whom he saw when at Rome, that an owl which then appeared to him was an auspicious omen of a deliverance to him, and that when he should again see it he should die within five days. Agrippa fell into violent agonies, and bitterly reproached

* Compare Acts xii. 22, 23.

his attendants for their wicked flattery of a weak mortal. After suffering a few days he expired in dreadful torments*. It is supposed that he was subjected by Divine judgment to an ulcer which generated worms, as had been the case with his grandfather, and as had likewise happened to Antiochus Epiphanes, Sylla Felix, and Pheretima, the wife of Battus, spoken of by Herodotus†. The mention of the owl, which gives a ludicrous and improbable air to this story, is omitted by Eusebius, who evidently states nearly the same account, some fictitious additions excepted, with that which is related in the Acts‡.

Josephus informs us that Ananus the younger brought the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, before the Sanhedrim hastily and illegally convened, and upon an accusation which he had formed, delivered him to be stoned to death§. It appears from the complaint which in consequence was made to Albinus,

* Antiq. lib. xix. c. 8.

† 2 Maccab. c. ix. Plutarch, Sylla, v. iii. p. 95. Edit. Tonson. Herod. Lib. iv. c. 205.

‡ Acts xii. 23.

§ Antiq. lib. xx. c. 8. comp. with Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. c. 24.

that the consent of the civil Governor was judged necessary to sanction the decrees of the Sanhedrim in capital cases, and what is stated on this occasion by Josephus, explains the course of proceeding which had been previously adopted at the condemnation of our Saviour, who after he had been led to Caiaphas, and condemned for blasphemy by the High Priest, was conducted to Pilate.

It is to be observed that there was an appeal from the lesser council of seven, in other cities, to the supreme council of seventy, at Jerusalem, which declared the law against those who were guilty of capital offences, but the power of life and death was taken away from them; which circumstance seems to throw some light upon our Saviour's words, "It cannot be, that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem *," making them to convey, not only a reference to the callous and vindictive spirit of the Jews, but an allusion to the laws by which they were constrained.

The conduct of the Jews towards James, called "the Just," with relation, probably, to the righteousness of the law, is said to have been regarded by the miserable people as one cause of the condemnation with which

* Luke xiii. 33.

they were visited ; and this guilty conviction might have been enforced by the declaration of Christ with respect to their punishment for the righteous blood which they had before shed. Theophylact refers to a passage in Josephus to this effect, as relating that the wrath of God was kindled on account of this murder. The passage is not to be found in the present copies of the historian, though it is observed that the conduct of Ananus was condemned by the honest and conscientious part of the city, and made a subject of complaint to Agrippa and Albinus*. It may be worth remarking, that we learn from a fragment of Hegesippus†, that the Ebionites interpreted a prophecy of Isaiah as foretelling that very murder, and its consequent punishment, representing the prophecy, however, to contain more than the sacred text authorizes, citing it thus: “ Let
 “ us take away the Just One, for it is un-
 “ profitable to us, and therefore say ye to
 “ the righteous, that it shall be well with
 “ them, for they shall eat the fruit of their
 “ doings‡.” Or as others render the pas-

* Antiq. lib. xx. c. 8.

† Whiston's 1st Dissert. on Joseph. lib. i. § 15.

‡ Isaiah iii. 10.

sage, “ Let us take away the Just One, for
 “ he is unprofitable to us, therefore shall
 “ they eat the fruit of their own ways.”

Josephus then, it may be presumed, was sensible that the guilt of the Jews was aggravated by their conduct in this instance, as without doubt it was in that greater and unexampled work of depravity, the crucifixion of Christ, though he has not expressly specified it among the causes of God’s anger.

Josephus speaks of Felix as having been the Governor of Judea, and of Portius Festus having succeeded him ; in a manner which concurs with the representations of Sacred History, and circumstances stated by the Evangelical writers*. He relates also, that Felix had procured the death of Jonathan the High Priest, who had recommended him to be procurator of Judea, but who had excited the displeasure of Felix, by his admonition to him, to correct his administration †; a particular proof of what Tacitus affirms, that he did not scruple to commit any kind of injustice. Josephus remarks that the Cæsarean Jews followed him with complaints to

* Antiq. lib. xx. c. 6, 7. De Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 12. 14.

† Antiq. lib. xx. c. 7. p. 893.

Rome, and that he narrowly escaped their resentment, which tends to confirm the probability of the account of St. Luke, that Felix hoped that money should be given to him, of St. Paul that he might loose him, and it is to be remembered that Paul had told Felix that he had come to bring alms and offerings to his nation*.

Josephus represents Felix to have seduced Drusilla from her former husband and religion, she having been the wife of Azizus, king of Emesa†, particulars confirmed by Tacitus, excepting that the Roman historian represents Drusilla as the grand-daughter of Antony and Cleopatra, whereas she was the sister of Agrippa, and Tacitus probably confounded her with another wife of Felix, who had been three times married‡. From all that we collect from the Heathen historians, we are led to remark with what peculiar boldness St. Paul must have reasoned before such a judge, concerning righteousness, tem-

* Acts xxiv. 17. Antiq. lib. xx. c. 7. p. 895.

† Antiq. lib. xx. c. 6. p. 890. and Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 9. Annal. lib. xii. c. 54. Gen. xlix. 10.

‡ Suet. Claud. c. 28. Lardner, Part I. b. i. c. 1. p. 28. Edit. Kippis, 1788.

perance, and judgment to come, and we hear without surprise, that Felix trembled.

Josephus shews his belief in the immortality of the soul, and professes to have dissuaded his companions after the siege of Jotapata from destroying themselves and killing him, by alleging arguments very similar, and enforced by similar figures, to those which are employed by St. Paul: the following passage is remarkable. “ All have
 “ mortal bodies formed of corruptible matter, but the soul is immortal, being a portion of the divinity inhabiting our bodies.
 “ What, know ye not that they who depart
 “ out of life according to the laws of nature,
 “ and pay to God the debt which he claims,
 “ when it is his will that we should be composed to sleep, will obtain eternal praise,
 “ and double houses and generations, and
 “ that pure and obedient souls remain about
 “ to receive a most holy place in heaven, for whence, after the revolution of
 “ ages, they shall be again appointed to inhabit new bodies; but that the souls of
 “ those who have madly laid violent hands
 “ upon themselves, shall be consigned to the
 “ darkest grave or hell * ?”

* De Bell. Jud. lib. iii. c. 7. p. 1144.

How similar is this to what St. Paul says,
 “ for we know that if our earthly frame of
 “ this tabernacle were dissolved we have a
 “ building of God, an house not made with
 “ hands, eternal in the heavens, for in this
 “ we groan earnestly desiring to be clothed
 “ upon with an house which is from heaven *.”

The remarks of Josephus which have been thought to allude to a transmigration of souls, and their return after a revolution of ages, might have been introduced in accommodation to popular notions prevailing in his time. Vespasian not long after, exhorting his soldiers to the desperate enterprise of scaling the tower of Antonia, animated them by intermingling arguments of vulgar and erroneous superstition with just grounds of appeal to the assurance of the immortality of the soul; which had been fully ratified within the walls of the city which he assailed, saying: “ But what man of sense and
 “ spirit can be so far ignorant that those
 “ whose souls are released by the sword
 “ from the body, in the ranks of battle;
 “ are translated into the pure element

* 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. Lardner.

“ of heaven, and enthroned in the stars,
 “ hence to appear to their posterity as good
 “ and propitious demons. But for those
 “ who die in their bed, as we say, or of
 “ some bodily disease, their souls from that
 “ instant are buried in darkness, let them be
 “ never so pure, and their memories are for
 “ ever lost*.”

The description which St. Paul gives of the Athenians, being in all things too superstitious, or rather (as the expression used implies,) addicted to the fear of the gods to excess, is confirmed by Josephus, who represents them to have been the most religious people in Greece. There are passages likewise in Sophocles, particularly in the *Œdipus Coloneus* to the same effect†.

There are many other particulars mentioned by Josephus which illustrate the accuracy of the Sacred Writers, but which require too much detail to be noticed here. The representation which Josephus gives of the destruction of Jerusalem verifies in the fullest and most circumstantial manner the completion of our Saviour's denunciations

* De Bell. Jud. lib. vi. c. 1. p. 1263.

† Lin. 252. 1065, 6. et Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. ii.

with respect to that ever memorable event: some particulars, in illustration of this subject, have been already produced, but the whole relation of Josephus is so exact a comment upon the prophecies of Christ, that some further particulars must here be mentioned, and nothing, indeed, can be more interesting than to pursue the subject by comparing the specific declarations of our Lord with the history of their accomplishment. The prophecies were delivered forty years, and recorded by St. Matthew near thirty years before the destruction of the city, and the Evangelists were dead before the events were accomplished, excepting St. John, of whom it had been foretold, that he should not see death till the things which were to come to pass should be fulfilled.

Josephus states, that the Jews were impressed with the apprehension of the subversion of their city; the apprehension, when contrasted with the convictions which they had so long and so firmly entertained with respect to the eternal duration of their polity, and the immutable character of their institutions, is very remarkable, and argues a conscious sense of the guilt which had been

incurred by the nation ; and a knowledge of the threats which had been uttered against it.

In considering the general ground of this apprehension, and the extent of the Divine wrath, which at this time overshadowed the Jewish nation, it is necessary to include in our view some reference to those threats, which had been uttered from the earliest times by Moses and the prophets against the Jews, and which evidently pointed for their ultimate completion to the period in which their wickedness should be consummated by the condemnation and murder of Christ, and the persecution of his disciples. Josephus seems to have been persuaded, that it was the design of Providence to inflict the punishments which he had predicted against the Jews for their wickedness *, and he confesses, with full conviction, that neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, or any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness. It deserves to be noticed that the Jews were excited to the war principally by a confidence in the prophecies relating to the Messiah.

* De Bell. Jud. lib. vii. c. 4.

The historian informs us that the neighbouring mountains echoed to the groans and lamentations of the people, whose sufferings he describes in words which are very striking, to have been so great, that “it appeared to him, that if all the misfortunes of all men from the beginning of the world, were compared with those of the Jews, they would not be so considerable as those which they sustained *;” a remark which cannot but remind us of the signal declaration of our Lord, that “then there should be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to his [this] time, no, nor ever should be, and that except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but, that for the elect’s sake, those days should be shortened †.”

Moses had foretold that unless the Jews should reform, God would avenge his covenant, and bring “a nation against them from far, from the ends of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, coming as the lightning shineth from the east to the west, a nation of fierce countenance, which should not regard the person of the old or shew favour to

* Præf. ad Bell. Jud.

† Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.

“ the young, that they should destroy the
 “ fruit of the cattle, and the fruit of the land,
 “ and that they should besiege the people in
 “ all their gates, until their high and fenced
 “ walls came down, wherein they trusted
 “ throughout all their land,” and that the
 Jews should eat “ the fruit of their own body,
 “ the flesh of their sons and of their daugh-
 “ ters, which the Lord their God had given
 “ them, in the siege, and in the straightness
 “ wherewith their enemies should distress
 “ them *.”

In the literal accomplishment of these denunciations Josephus informs us, that Vespasian and his army, which was brought from Britain, entered Judea from the east, and when come to Gadara, slew all, man by man, not shewing mercy to any, such was their hatred to the nation †. The like slaughter was made at Gamala, only two women escaping by concealment, and not even children being spared ‡. At Jerusalem, the impetuosity and perseverance of the besieging army, and the resistance and obstinacy of the besieged, the closeness of the circumvallation, and the des-

* Deut. xxviii. 49, 50. 58.

† De Bell. Jud. lib. iii. c. 6.

‡ Ibid. lib. iv. c. 1.

perate sallies of the Jews; the extent of the famine, and the horrors which it occasioned, are utterly unparalleled: so that the tender and delicate woman manifested literally those unnatural cruelties towards her husband and children, which are so strongly described by Moses *.

Josephus states, that five hundred persons were, upon an average, daily taken prisoners, who excited the compassion of Titus, but least he should be embarrassed by the custody of men whose courage and despair were so remarkable, he relinquished them to the soldiers, who tortured and crucified them before the walls of the city in such numbers, "that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies†."

Upon other occasions, however, Titus, in contemplating the wretched spectacle of men, emaciated and disfigured by the dreadful effects of famine, and massacred by his soldiers for the gold which they had swallowed when they deserted to them, issued the strictest orders, and adopted the strongest

* Levit. xxvi. 29. Deut. xxviii. 56. et de Bell. Jud. lib. vi. c. 3. p. 1275.

† De Bell. Jud. lib. v. c. 11. p. 1247.

measures to protect them : and when he beheld the dead and putrifying bodies which were cast from the walls, he uttered a groan, and spreading out his hands to heaven, he called God to witness, that it was not his doing ; and he assured the soldiers, with peculiar confidence, that they were assisted by God himself. On entering the city also, when he contemplated the height and solidity of the fortresses, the magnitude of the individual stones, and the exact and well-compacted harmony with which they were joined, and considered their breadth and length, he exclaimed : “ We have fought
 “ with God on our side, who thrust down the
 “ Jews from these fortifications ; for what
 “ could the hands or machines of men avail
 “ against these towers * ? ”

Our Saviour had forewarned his disciples, that there should arise false Christs and false prophets, who should shew great signs and wonders ; and that if they should say unto them, “ behold he is in the desert, behold he is in the secret chamber, they should not go forth.” Josephus represents many such impostors to have increased

* De Bell. Jud. lib. v. c. 12. lib. vi. c. 9. p. 1290. et passim.

the infatuation of the people, and exasperated the enemy, by urging the Jews to the most insolent and contemptuous defiance of the Romans, in the confidence of miraculous deliverance.

Our Saviour instructed the Jews to pray to God, that their flight might not be on the sabbath ; and it appears from Josephus, that very remarkable calamities resulted from a flight on that day from Gischala, besieged by Titus, while those who remained in the town experienced the clemency of Titus*. It appears also, that the superstitious regard which they paid to the day, so as to be prevented from defending themselves, even in cases of extreme necessity, occasioned the taking of their city by Titus, as it had before subjected them to defeat by Pompey and Sosius†.

The Jews, it was foretold by Christ, were to be left few in number. It is related by Josephus, that upwards of eleven hundred thousand of them were destroyed from the entrance of the armies into Judea ; and it appears by the enumeration made by Bishop

* De Bell. Jud. lib. iv. c. 2. Cont. Apion. lib. i.

† De Bell. Jud. lib. vi. c. 5. See Antiq. viii. 1. xiv. c. 4. lib. xii. c. 6. de Bell. Jud. lib. iv. c. 2. lib. vii. c. 3. 1 Maccab. ii. 32.

Newton, that the number of their slain exceeded one million three hundred and fifty thousand, and that ninety-seven thousand of them were taken captives*.

The siege of Jerusalem began at the pass-over, when the city was filled with assembled multitudes.

The historian states also, that during the siege upwards of seven hundred thousand persons were carried out to burial through the gate, besides the unnumbered multitudes thrown over the walls. Tacitus reports six hundred thousand to have perished. In any case we may subscribe to the remark of Josephus, that in reality it was God who condemned the whole nation, and turned every course that was taken for their preservation, to their destruction†.

Our blessed Saviour declared, that Jerusalem should be destroyed before a generation should be passed away, or the Gospel preached to all nations‡. He declared that the enemies of the city should lay it even with the ground, and not leave one stone on another§; and Micah had before pre-

* De Bell. Jud. lib. v. c. 3. lib. vii. c. 11. lib. vi. c. 5.

† Lib. v. c. 2.

‡ Comp. Isai. xiii. 10. with Matt. xxiv. 11.

§ Luke xix. 44.

dicted, that Zion should be ploughed as a field *.

Josephus states, that Titus laboured to preserve the temple, but that the soldiers, as if hurried on by a Divine impulse, would not listen to him, but set fire to every part.

Titus afterwards ordered the remainder of the city to be demolished, and the foundations of its walls to be dug up †.

From that time, all attempts to rebuild it have failed, and Ammianus Marcellinus and Julian, furnish evidence of miraculous interposition to prevent its being effected, so that even Gibbon seems constrained to admit, what he shews every disposition to question.

Thus it appears, that there are many particulars incorporated with the works of Josephus, which form together a firm texture of truth, in which we every where discern the confirmation of Sacred History. An Hebrew writer, who lived at the time that the struc-

* Micah iii. 12.

† De Bell. Jud. lib. vii. c. 2. Euseb. Demon. Evang. lib. vi. c. 13. p. 273. Edit. Par. 1628.

ture of the Mosaic dispensation was dissolved, and the foundations of the Christian temple were laid, is endowed with particular talents, and placed in peculiar circumstances, to enable him to bear undeniable testimony to the most important truths. A Jew, led by the hand of Providence, is conducted by the Romans to Jerusalem, to behold it encompassed with their armies, which effect its destruction in the manner precisely foretold. “ He walks about Zion, and goes
 “ round about her, tells the towers thereof,
 “ marks well her bulwarks, and considers her
 “ palaces, that he may tell them that are to
 “ come after.”

He acknowledges every where, and represents the Roman emperor to have acknowledged the direction of the Almighty *. He exhibits the Jews labouring under a judicial blindness, and encouraged by the remembrance of God’s frequent interposition in their favour, to believe, even when the enemy was within the walls, that they should still experience a deliverance, and thereby aggravating their own calamities, and ensuring

* De Bell. Jud. lib. vii. c. 28.

their own fate, having neither eyes to see, or minds to believe*.

A spectator and an historian of the events, he verifies the completion of the divine revelation in every part; and while he thought, possibly, that he was describing only the fulfilment of the Jewish prophecies, he unintentionally substantiated the exact accomplishment of the denunciations of our Lord †. He, and the writers, who consent with him, weave a purple robe for Christ, which though put on with insult and mockery, is expressive of the inherent majesty of him who wears it; and they inscribe a title in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, which with whatsoever view it was written, “ is written,” and declares that “ Jesus is the “ King of the Jews.”

The conviction which must result to every impartial reader of the works of Josephus, cannot, I think, be resisted. It is related in the Life of Count de Santenne, who became

* De Bell. Jud. lib. iv. c. 7. lib. vi. c. i.

† It is not undeserving of notice, that Josephus relates, that the watchmen on the walls of the city, when they saw the tremendous stones approaching which were thrown from the engines, were accustomed to cry out, “ the Son cometh;” all the manuscripts agree in this reading, and Reland observes, that some will suspect a mystery.

a monk of La Trappe, and is known under the name of Palæmon, that he was first moved to consider the majesty of God, and to a faith in the Scriptures, by reading Josephus *.

Josephus mentions other writers, besides those whose report has already been adduced, who bear testimony to the Jewish History, as Agatharcides, who speaks of the reverence of the Jews for the sabbath, in abstaining on that day from military exercises and agriculture, and employing it in devotion †; he states also, that Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, availed himself of this custom to enter the city with an army on that day.

The historian mentions likewise Theophilus, Theodotius, Aristophanes, Hermogenes, Conon, Zopyrian, and others, who particularly spoke of the Jews, and acknowledged the antiquity of their nation.

* Fabricius, in Flav. Joseph. lib. iv.

† Cont. Apion, lib. i.

CHAP. XXXII.

*The Voyage of St. Paul apparently confirmed
by an Account in the Life of Josephus.*

THERE is an account in the life of Josephus, written by himself, which contains so many circumstances of correspondence with the relation given of St. Paul's voyage, in the Acts of the Apostles, that it may be worth while to compare the two reports; and perhaps it will appear not improbable, that they both refer, in part at least, to the same events, and that St. Paul and Josephus were companions upon this occasion, sailing during part of the voyage together, and travelling in company from Puteoli to Rome.

The very interesting detail of circumstances recorded by St. Luke, has been examined with so much attention, that it is somewhat surprizing that the confirmation of it, which seems to be afforded by Josephus, should have escaped notice, or that the passage at least should not have been brought forward with a view to substantiate the statements made

by the Evangelist; a consideration which, while it imposes the necessity of much diffidence, tends also to excite a desire that the two accounts should be carefully compared; since it would be an interesting subject of reflection, if the particulars in which the two relations differ, could be reconciled, and we might be authorized to conclude, that Josephus was a fellow passenger with St. Paul during a part of the voyage.

As the account in the Acts of the Apostles is familiar and accessible to all, it is unnecessary to exhibit it at full length here, or to give more than an abstract of the chief circumstances.

The Apostle, when accused before Felix and Festus, having appealed to Cæsar, was ordered to be sent to Rome. He is described as having embarked in conformity to this order, in a ship of Adramyttium. It is not stated from what port he sailed, but as the vessel touched next day at Sidon, it was possibly from Ptolemais (first called Acon *,) or as Grotius supposes from Cæsarea †.

After having arrived at Myra, in Lycia, he was put on board a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy; many vessels being usually

* Pliny, lib. ii. c. 73.

† Acts xxv. 4—13, and xxvii.

employed from that port to convey corn and other productions to Italy, which generally frequented Puteoli, as Bryant has observed.

The circumstances of the voyage are described with an animation and a detail particularly affecting, so as to carry with them the lively evidence of truth and exactness. When on board this vessel, St. Paul seems, by some Divine intimation, to have perceived that the voyage would be attended, not only with damage to the ship and its burden, but to the lives of the passengers; and to have, in consequence, advised the centurion to pass the winter in a haven of Crete; but the advice not having been followed, and a tempestuous wind having arisen, the vessel, after exposure to many perils, struck; and the hinder part was broken by the violence of the waves; upon which the whole crew, consisting of two hundred and seventy-six persons, casting themselves into the sea, escaped in safety, agreeably to the assurance of St. Paul, who had foretold that not an hair should fall from the head of any of them.

The island of Melita, which the Apostle with others reached, has generally been supposed, on the authority of Bochart, Cellarius, and others, and by local tradition, to have been Malta. Grotius mentions an an-

cient inscription in that island, in which the first magistrate is styled, as by St. Luke, the chief man of the island, (πρῶτος τῆς νήσου,) and the Romanists have grounded many legends and superstitions on the supposition. There is, however, good reason to believe, as Bryant has shewn, that it was not Malta; and that it really was Melita Illyrica, which was in the direct course of the voyage, being situated in the Adriatic between Corcyra Nigra and the main land*. Malta, though Bochart has endeavoured to represent it† as being in the Adriatic, cannot properly be included within the limits of that sea.

After remaining three months in the island which they had happily reached, the Apostle and his companions again departed in a ship of Alexandria, and after having for a short time landed at Syracuse, at length disembarked at Puteoli, where they found *brethren*, and from thence, after being met by more brethren at Appii Forum and the three Taverns, they proceeded to Rome, where St. Paul was allowed to dwell in a private house under the care of a soldier appointed to remain with him.

The account in the life of Josephus written

* Bryant on the Island of Melita, Polyb. Stephen.

† Geogr. Sac.

by himself, appears to relate to this voyage, and seems to prove that Josephus was a companion in a part of it with St. Paul. There are, indeed, difficulties which interfere with this opinion, which, as the subject is of some moment, may be proposed for critical investigation. The relation is as follows:

“ After the 26th year of my age, it hap-
 “ pened that I went up to Rome on the oc-
 “ casion that I shall now mention. At the
 “ time when Felix was procurator of Judea,
 “ there were certain priests of my acquaint-
 “ ance, good and worthy persons, whom on
 “ a small and trifling occasion he had put
 “ into bonds, and sent to Rome to plead
 “ their cause before Cæsar. For these I
 “ was desirous to procure deliverance, and
 “ that especially because I was informed
 “ that they were not unmindful of piety to-
 “ wards God, even under their affliction,
 “ but supported themselves with figs and
 “ nuts: accordingly I came to Rome, though
 “ it was often through great hazards by sea,
 “ for our ship being wrecked in the midst
 “ of the Adriatic Sea, we that were in it,
 “ being about six hundred in number, swam
 “ for our lives all the night, when, upon the
 “ first appearance of the day, a ship of Cyrene
 “ appearing to us, by the providence of

“ God, I, and some others, eighty in all,
 “ *preventing* the rest, were taken up
 “ into the ship; and when I had thus
 “ escaped, and had come to Dicæarchia,
 “ which the Italians call Puteoli, I became
 “ acquainted with Aliturus, an actor of
 “ plays, a Jew by birth, and much beloved
 “ by Nero, and through his interest became
 “ known to Poppæa, Cæsar’s wife, and took
 “ care as soon as possible to entreat her to
 “ procure that the priests might be set at
 “ liberty *.

The reasons which might lead us to suppose that this account refers to the voyage and shipwreck, which St. Paul describes, are as follows: In the first place, it is to be observed, that the period of time which is assigned by the best supported calculations, namely, A. D. 63 †, corresponds with that mentioned by Josephus, since the historian relates himself to have been born in the third year of Caligula, A. D. 37, and to have undertaken his voyage in the 26th year of his age, which will bring his arrival at Rome to A. D. 63.

It is not improbable that Josephus, who

* See Life of F. Josephus, Whist. Transl.

† Hales’s New Analys. vol. ii. p. 11. 13. Lardner, vol. i. c. 3. p. 30.

was of Sacerdotal descent, and brought up in the strict profession of the Pharisaic opinions, should have felt an interest in the welfare of St. Paul, who was a Pharisee, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and who might be called a priest, as he assumed the character of a preacher of righteousness. What Josephus says of Felix having, as procurator of Judea, sent the persons spoken of to Rome may be inaccurately stated, or may relate to some order first given by Felix to this effect, but the execution of which was delayed by the change of governor. This would accord with the account of St. Luke, and would not be inconsistent with what is further stated by him, that St. Paul was detained two years in confinement, and that Festus, not long after his arrival to take possession of the government, examined Paul at Cæsarea, and after having again heard his defence in presence of Agrippa, directed him to be conveyed to Rome. Josephus then, speaking of the imprisonment and sending of St. Paul to Rome, ascribes both the measures to their first author, whose unpopular government was the subject of very general complaint, and whose proceedings were most likely to be traversed at Rome.

The piety and resignation which the histo-

rian ascribes to his companions, accord well with the character of St. Paul ; and the circumstance of their supporting themselves by figs and nuts, may help to explain what is stated in the Acts, that the passengers fasted fourteen days* ; that is, had no regular food. It might have been by means of the interest of Aliturus, that St. Paul was allowed the liberty of residing at his own house at Rome.

The other difficulties which occur are not so easily removed, and present a fair subject for discussion. It is stated by Josephus, that there were six hundred persons in the ship in which he sailed, though, in the vessel in which St. Paul was wrecked, there were but two hundred and seventy-six.

The number, however, mentioned by Josephus is so great as to lead us to suspect some mistake, since it is not by any means credible, that trading vessels at that time were accustomed to contain, or capable of accommodating so great a number of persons.

With respect to the difference between the accounts in the Acts, and that of Josephus, as to the circumstances of the escape, it is to be considered whether Josephus, and

* Or fasted on the fourteenth day ; see observations on the xiith Book of Pope's translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, l. 532.

the seventy-nine with him, might not have been separated from those, who swam to shore at Melita, and have been taken up in the ship of Cyrene, being the persons who “ first cast themselves into the sea ;” as is related in the Acts; and whether the remainder of the crew, whom Josephus states, were swimming with him all the night, and of whose subsequent fate he says nothing, might not have reached the land together with St. Paul. Why, when Josephus afterwards, upon this supposition, must have received the account of St. Paul’s escape with the rest, he should omit to record it, can be explained only from a reluctance which he might feel, to confirm or report the miraculous circumstances which demonstrated the Divine countenance to St. Paul’s mission, which if he had admitted he must have been a convert to Christianity. He certainly speaks inaccurately in one instance, representing himself and his companions to have swam all the night, which, without a miracle at least, could not have been literally effected; another difficulty, and perhaps the greatest, is, that St. Paul expressly says, that they escaped all safe to land, and that when they escaped they knew that the island was called Melita, which seems to imply, that they all reached the same

island. It is possible, however, that the Apostle, by the word “all,” refers to the immediate antecedent in the verse, speaking distinctly of those who followed the first division.

The integrity of the miracle and the declarations of St. Paul, that there should be no loss of any man’s life, and that not an hair should fall from the head of any of them, are equally established, whether the whole crew reached the land, or some only, while others were taken up into a ship. If Josephus was one of the brethren whom the Apostle found at Puteoli, he might have been delayed on his voyage from Melita, or detained at Puteoli, by Aliturus, till St. Paul arrived there: if these circumstances should not be thought to be satisfactorily reconciled, there are still so many concurrences, that the accounts must at least be allowed to bear a very remarkable resemblance to each other, if not to refer to the same event; for let it be considered that in both accounts the prisoners are represented to have been put into bonds, by Felix, upon a trifling occasion, and in both, to have appealed to Cæsar. In both relations, men of extraordinary piety and excellence are exposed to shipwreck in the Adriatic in the same year; and in both they wonderfully escape by a remarkable Providence. In both

histories they arrive at Puteoli, and in both instances the prisoners are, by an unexpected indulgence in some degree, set at liberty, in consequence it should seem of interest made with the emperor.

It is probable, from some circumstances which are alluded to in the Epistle of St. Paul, that he appeared once if not twice formally before Nero, soon after his arrival at Rome. In his Epistle to the Philippians, he observes, that “the things which had happened, had fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel, so that his bonds in Christ were manifest in all the palace*, and in all other palaces;” and he seems to allude to his examination in his Epistle to Timothy, stating, that “in his first answer no man stood with him, but all men forsook him, notwithstanding,” continues he, “the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion †;” thus employing a term to describe the emperor which is often applied, by other writers, to tyrannical princes ‡.

* Philip. i. 12, 13.

† 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17; see also Acts xxv. 9, 10, 12. xxvi. 31, 32. xxv. 26.

‡ Ezek. xix. 1—9.

It has been farther conjectured that Julius, who courteously entreated Paul *, might have recommended him to the captain of the guard. The charge against him was not likely to excite much sensation at Rome.

Lardner supposes it probable that St. Paul might have been brought before the emperor, by Burrhus, the Præfect of the Prætorian guard, and that many of the court, and possibly Seneca might have been present †.

The Apostle appears to have converted some in the palace, not, it should seem, merely domestics or tradesmen, but relations of the Emperor ‡: and, in his Epistle to the Philippians, he sends the salutation of those that are of Cæsar's household §.

* Acts xxvii. 3.

† Lardner in 2 Tim. xii.

‡ Vid. Annot. Philol. in Polyb. et Arrian. a M. Georgio Raphael in Philet. 4022.

§ Philip. iv. 12.

END OF VOL. I.



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